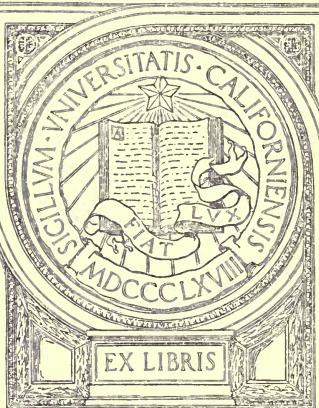


**JACK
HARKAWAY
AT
OXFORD**



BRACEBRIDGE HEMYNG

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

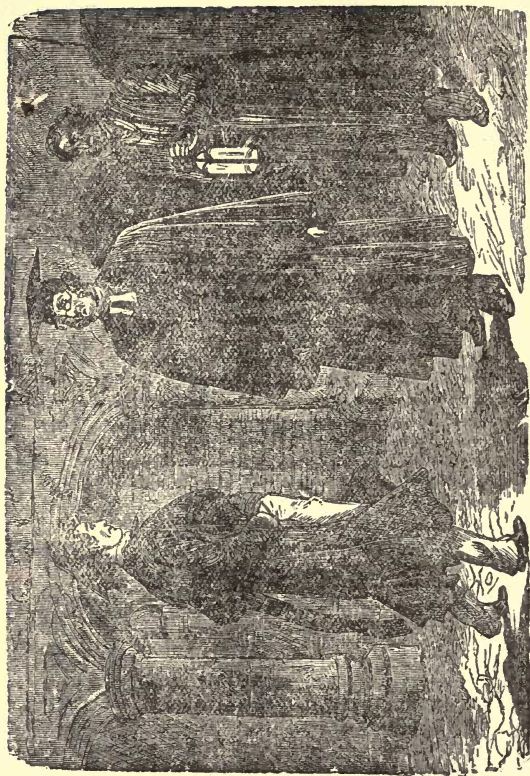


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" ' YOUR NAME AND COLLEGE, SIR ? ' SAID THE DEAN."

*Frontispiece. Oxford, * page 3a.*

JACK HARKAWAY

AT OXFORD

BY
BRACEBRIDGE HEMYNG

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
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JACK HARKAWAY AT OXFORD.

CHAPTER I.

JACK BECOMES AN OXFORD FRESHMAN.

"OXFORD! Oxford!" The porters ran briskly up and down the platform, as the Great Western express ran into the station.

"Oxford! Oxford!" they cried, opening the doors of the carriages, and allowing the passengers to alight. The engine that had brought the train down was known as the Flying Dutchman, and the speed at which she went was something to marvel at.

"Here, porter, open the door," said a young gentleman.

The man did as he was requested, and took charge of rugs, hat-boxes, fishing-rods, and other trifles, with which the passenger was burdened.

No sooner had the passenger landed himself on the platform than one about his own age, which was not more than eighteen, stepped up, and shook him cordially by the hand.

"Harvey, old fellow, I'm delighted to see you," said Jack. "How are they all at home?" he exclaimed.

"Jolly, thanks. I thought you would come and meet me, Harkaway," said Harvey.

Jack Harkaway had been up at Oxford for a week.

Harvey was unable to come with him owing to his mother's illness, but when she got better, he wrote to say he should be down by the express.

Jack wore the cap and gown which distinguish university men.

Seeing it for the first time, it arrested Harvey's attention.

"You've come out full fig to meet me," he exclaimed.

"Can't help it," replied Jack. "It's what one must do here, if you don't want to get proctorised."

"It looks more comfortable than going about in beaver," answered Harvey, thinking of his own chimney-pot hat.

"We call it a mortar-board ; you'll soon get used to it. But come and have a quiet beer with me."

"How about the luggage?"

"Oh, the porter will send it up."

The man, who had been respectfully waiting while the friends were talking, touched his cap, and exclaimed—

"Certainly, sir. What college, sir?"

"St. Aldate's. Ask for Mr. Harvey's rooms ; they are in the inner quad."

They gave the man some money, which in its amount so acted upon his sense of gratitude, that he touched his cap again, and looking out a truck began to place the luggage which the guard had taken out of the van on it, preparatory to wheeling it up to the college mentioned by Jack.

Adjourning to the refreshment-room, the two freshmen—as new-comers in their first year are called—devoted their attention to the sparkling bitter.

"Nothing like malt," remarked Harvey, "after a journey. One dip of the beak in the foaming tankard is a reviver. And now, tell me, how do you get on here? What do you do, and how do you like it?"

"Awfully," replied Jack. "I have scarcely had time to settle down, but I like it immensely."

"Is it like school?"

"Not a bit ; there is as much difference between school and college, as there is between chalk and cheese. We have chapel every morning at eight, but we can shirk it three days out of seven."

"Then you do very much as you please?"

"I should think so ; there's lots of liberty. You're not expected to be in gates till twelve, so you can spend your evenings in other fellows' rooms. The colleges are dotted about the town in such a very quaint way, you know."

"Where do you dine?" inquired Harvey.

"In our own hall, at five."

"And the work?"

"Oh ! the work depends very much upon what a fellow

likes to do. The reading men read in their rooms and with coaches. A coach is a tutor, who puts you up to dodges and questions for the examinations."

"But you have to attend lectures, haven't you?"

"Yes; I am in twelve lectures a week, of an hour each," replied Jack; "that makes just two hours a day. Think of that."

"What do you read?"

"Oh! Greek Testament, Virgil, Herodotus, and the first book of Euclid. It's child's play to a fellow who was in the first form at our old school."

"I think we shall have a jolly time," remarked Harvey.

"I'm sure of it."

"How's Monday?"

"Oh! the nigger is all right. He sleeps out of college, but he waits upon me, and is always hanging about my rooms. The men call him the Black Prince, and have rare larks with him."

"And Mole?"

"Oh! Mole is up here, and has started as a coach. I am one of his pupils, though I have not troubled him much yet."

"Where are my rooms, and what are they like?" said Harvey, adding—"I am afraid I am bothering you with such a jolly lot of questions."

"Which it gives me great pleasure to answer, my dear Dick. Your rooms are in the same quad as mine, though on a different staircase."

"What's a quad?"

"Why, the quadrangle, or square, the houses in which are cut up into sets of rooms for the men. We have only one tutor, Mr. Scraper, living in our quad, and we are trying to make his life so miserable that he will have to clear out."

"Is St. Aldate's a swell college?"

"I should think it was. There are lots of rich men in it, and it is thought the fastest in Oxford. I've made some acquaintances already."

"Nice fellows?"

"Very. The first is Tom Carden; he is the captain of our college eight, and has a funny way of altering the letters of words."

"How?"

"Why, instead of saying he's going to have a mutton chop, he says—'I'm going to struggle with a chuttur mop.' You'll soon find out."

"I see. If he was going to take a walk, it would be wake a talk. Funny man!"

"Then there is Fabian Hall, he's a reading man—awful sap, and Sir Sydney Dawson, who is the head of the fast set; got heaps of tin, kicks up a horrid din late at night, drives tandem, and drives the dons, as we call the authorities, frantic."

"I must desire his further acquaintance, as Bottom the weaver said," remarked Harvey.

"Then there is Gussy Kemp—can't quite make him out; and they are the lot, four of them, all told."

"What's amiss with Kemp?"

"I don't know, exactly. He's clever, but he's got a bad mouth."

"That's a queer reason for disliking a man," laughed Harvey.

"You know the monkey I brought back from Singapore?" continued Jack.

"That artful, leary old article?"

"That's the one. Well, I've got him in my rooms, and he's a great card. He followed me into chapel the other day, and hid in the pulpit."

"By Jove!"

"Fact. Well, sir, he got up in the middle of the creed, and began chatting away like anything, and it was only by hitting him on the head with a stick that we got him to behave anything like decent. The dean sent for me, and I've had to promise to put a chain on him."

"What a joke!" said Harvey.

"It wasn't much of a joke for me. I got a wiggling, I can tell you. Ever since then Dawson has called him the Bishop of Oxford, whose nickname up here is Soapy Sam; so I expect the monkey will be called Soapy Sam or the Bishop to the day of his death."

"Did Dawson christen him?"

"Yes; he put him in my bath, and poured a bottle of wine over him. Didn't the Bishop walk into his affections though for it?"

"How?"

"He got on to the top of my bookcase and shied a plaster-of-Paris bust of Shakespeare bang on his head. Mop up the malt, and we'll toddle up to St. Aldate's."

Harvey put his arm in Jack's, and they walked from the station towards the town.

The glimpses that his conversation with Jack had given him of college life made Harvey anxious to get to St. Aldate's.

"You will like our college. It is a dear old place," exclaimed Jack.

"I hope so; at all events, I shall never forget that it is through your kindness that I am able to come up here," replied Harvey.

"Don't bother about that," said Jack, returning the pressure of his friend's hand.

CHAPTER II.

A SELL FOR HARVEY.

It was the beginning of the winter term, and the air, though cold, was clear and crisp.

The first object of interest as they entered the town was a gaol, which is called Oxford Castle.

It has an imposing appearance, and Harvey said—

"What is that place?"

A mischievous idea came into Jack's head.

"That's our college," he said.

"Is it really? It doesn't look very old."

"Ah, it's very old inside. We have put a new front on," answered Jack.

"I wonder if my traps are come?" said Harvey.

"Go inside and ask; I will go a little further and get some cigars. The man at the gate will show you the place," replied Jack.

"Very well; don't be long. I want you to show me the place," replied Harvey.

Jack nodded, and went on a little way further.

Harvey, totally unsuspecting of the real character of the building, walked to the gate of the castle.

It happened that the week before a prisoner had escaped.

He was a young man, and Harvey somewhat resembled him in appearance, the similarity being further carried out by the fact of his having had his hair cut rather short the day before.

A solemn-looking official opened a wicket in the gate for him, at the same time asking him what he wanted.

"I want to be taken to my den," replied Harvey, in a cheery tone.

"Are you an inmate of the building, out on leave?" inquired the gatekeeper.

"I am afraid I have been absent for a week without leave," Harvey said, with a smile.

"What name?"

Harvey told him.

The name of the escaped convict was Chalvey, and the gatekeeper thought he said Chalvey.

A light instantly broke upon him.

Here was the escaped prisoner, touched by remorse, or hunted by the police, come to give himself up.

At first he fancied he was one of the new warders out on leave.

Now he felt sure that he had guessed rightly.

"Step inside," he said roughly.

Harvey did so, and found himself in a courtyard surrounded on two sides with a high brick wall, and in front of him was the gaol.

"Gloomy-looking sort of place," he thought.

"March!" exclaimed the gatekeeper; "and look 'ere, my lad, no humbug."

Harvey stared at him.

"Rude, uncultivated sort of buffer, this gatekeeper," he said to himself. "I must have him inquired into."

When the entrance to the goal was reached, the gatekeeper spoke to a warder, who looked at Harvey and nodded.

Unlocking a door with a key, he disclosed a long gallery, with doors on either side.

One of these he opened.

"This way!" he exclaimed.

Harvey hesitated a moment.

"Come on," said the warder. "You've give yourself up. What's the use of being stubborn?"

More puzzled than ever, Harvey entered the kamptuliconed passage, and was ushered into a narrow cell.

Before he had time to realise his position, the door was shut upon him, and the key turned with a click.

He looked on the bare walls, and the absence of furniture and carpet struck him strangely.

"Well," he exclaimed, "if this is college life at Oxford, all I can say is, Oxford is a rummy-go sort of a place. Very much a one-horse place, I should call it. Wonder where I am? wonder how long they mean to keep me here? Perhaps it's a lark; perhaps it's part of the regular thing one has to go through. Anyhow, it's not nice."

The minutes glided by, and he began to feel lonely and oppressed.

Putting his hands in his pockets, he whistled and tried to look out of a barred window, but could not, because it was too high up.

Just as he had reached the last bar of the chorus to "After the opera is over," a little grating in the door opened, and a grim face appeared, while a gruff voice exclaimed—

"No noise, you Chalvey."

Harvey subsided.

"They won't let me whistle, and they call me Chalvey," he murmured; "what shall I do? Funny place this. Oh! I know, I'll toss myself for imaginary drinks."

He put a half-a-crown in each hand, and made one hand cry to the other.

While he was thus engaged, the warder and the gate-keeper had gone to the governor of the gaol.

They informed him how that desperate and determined character, Chalvey, had given himself up.

The governor smiled a smile of satisfaction.

"I will go and see him. An example must be made of him. We'll black-hole and bread-and-water him," said the austere governor.

He proceeded to the cell, which was opened for him, and confronted Harvey.

"So you have come back, 192?" he said.

"What do you mean by calling me 192?" asked Harvey, indignantly.

"That's your number."

"Number be hanged !"

"You'd best be civil, or we shall know how to make you," replied the governor.

"Look here, old fellow ; is this a lark ?" asked Harvey.

"You're the man who escaped ; that's enough for me," answered the governor.

"Escaped ? What do you mean ?"

"Isn't he the man ?" inquired the governor, turning to the warder.

"He looks like him, sir. If he isn't, what did he want to come and give himself up for ?" replied the warder.

"Quite so. What have you got to say to that ?" asked the governor.

"All I know is that I'm an undergraduate of St. Aldate's," answered Harvey, "and I don't understand being treated like this when I come to my college. Are you the dean ?"

"Dean !" repeated the governor, in his turn surprised. "I'm the governor of Oxford Castle—that's the gaol, you know."

"Is this a gaol ?" exclaimed Harvey.

"Have I not told you so ?"

"Then I'm sold. It's Jack's doings, and I don't blame you, sir," said Harvey.

"Have we made a mistake ? Call the head warder, who knows all the faces. Make haste !" exclaimed the governor.

A minute or more elapsed, and the head warder appeared with a book of photographs in his hand.

He turned over the leaves, and looked carefully at Harvey.

"Have you got a strawberry mark upon your left wrist ?" he asked.

"No, nor never had. Look for yourself," replied Harvey, baring his arm.

"Then you're not Chalvey. It's a mistake."

The governor looked ashamed of himself.

"You're sure it's not Chalvey ?" he said.

"Positive, sir. Chalvey had a cast in his right eye, in addition to the mark."

"My dear young sir," exclaimed the governor, "I don't know how to apologise to you sufficiently. Come with me to my apartments, if you please. We must talk this

matter over, and I will myself walk up to St. Aldate's College with you."

"Thank you," replied Harvey.

He saw now that Harkaway had been playing him a trick, and was rather glad to get out of the cell.

"I'll have it out of Jack," he muttered.

The governor, who was a very gentlemanly man, had a long conversation with Harvey, and laughed heartily at the trick his friend had played upon him.

He pressed him to have a glass of wine, and wished to see him personally to the college.

This Harvey would not permit, saying he was sure he could find his way now.

"I trust," said the governor, "you acquit me of blame."

"Most decidedly, my dear sir," answered Harvey.

"I have to thank you for releasing me so soon."

They shook hands, and the warder who was so eager to shut him up a short time before, was now as anxious to civilly show him the way out.

Harvey gave him a shilling, and walked up the street.

At the door of a small tobacconist's he saw Harkaway, placidly puffing away at a big cigar.

"Hullo, Dick!" exclaimed Jack. "You don't mean to say you don't like your new quarters."

"You're a beast!" growled Harvey.

"What for?"

"Why, to sell me like that; but if you won't tell anybody, I'll forgive you."

"Oh, won't I?" replied Jack. "It's too good fun to be lost. What did they do with you?"

"Locked me up till the governor came, and then I soon squared matters. But it was too bad of you."

"So it was, dear boy. Have a weed, and be jolly," said Jack.

Harvey and Jack had both learned to smoke, and with cigars in their mouths, strolled up the High Street.

"This is what we call doing the High," remarked Jack.

"Where is St. Aldate?" asked Harvey.

"A little way down the street of the same name. Come along; don't be afraid this time."

"You won't sell me any more?"

"Not to-day. I'll promise you that," answered Jack.

They turned under an archway, and entered a large square, with a fountain playing in the centre.

The cathedral was at his back, and the college hall to the right of them up a flight of steps.

While the tower over the gateway held a great bell known as Tom, which gave it the name of the Tom Tower.

Passing through the outer quad, they came to an inner one.

"Here we are," said Jack. "My room forms a sky parlour. Freshmen must put up with what they can get."

"Can't you have lower rooms if you like?" said Harvey.

"Not in your first year. You can change after you have been here awhile, as other fellows change or leave. Come to my room, and we will send Monday or my scout to see if your things have come."

"What's the scout?"

"Oh, he's a great institution. He is my servant, and waits upon me in the hall. He rejoices in the pleasing name of Buster."

"Shall I have the same scout?"

"No, you're on another staircase, and the chances are you won't," replied Jack.

They ascended an aged staircase, and on the third story stopped at a heavy wooden door, which was shut.

"That's my oak," explained Jack, opening it with a key.

"Your oak?" repeated Harvey.

"Yes. There is an inner door, and when you are out, or don't want fellows to call and worry you, you shut the outer one, and that is sporting your oak."

They went in, and Harvey found that his friend had a sitting-room and bedroom, and a small place for a scout.

The apartments were elegantly furnished, and Jack had, with some taste, arranged his spears and bows, and other savage implements round the walls.

"I should think," said Harvey, "Monday must feel himself at home amongst all those Pisang and Limbian trophies."

"Oh, yes; Monday's an immense swell. All my friends have taken kindly to him."

There was a knock at the sitting-room door.

"Come in," cried Jack.

A being of middle height, fat, sleek, and having black as the prevailing colour of his garments, entered.

"Oh! it's you, Buster?" said Jack to his scout. "You have just come in time to get out some glasses and wine."

"Yes, sir," replied Buster, with a bow. "Is this Mr. Harvey, sir, of whom you have been speaking, and if I may make so bold?"

"You're not far out."

"Being Mr. Harvey's first day in college, I suppose he will not dine in hall, sir. Shall I order you a little feed at the 'Mitre' or the 'Clarendon?' Both very nice hotels, sir; or there is the 'Randolph.'"

"The 'Mitre' will do; it is close, too. Order something at four."

"Cert'n'y, sir," replied the scout, using a favourite phrase of his.

"And I say, Buster, can you tell me if Mr. Harvey's rooms are ready for him?"

"Yes, sir; the rooms is ready. The scout, which his name is Clinker, sir, and a friend of mine, has seen everything proper."

"Very well; you can go. I shall not want anything more."

"Begging your pardon, sir, there is one thing I should like to speak about."

"Some other time. Be off, now."

"It's a matter of importance, sir; leastways to me," persisted Buster.

Jack took up a book and threw it at the retreating figure of the scout, who had darted into the passage.

"You won't, won't you?" he muttered.

The irrepressible Buster, however, was not so easily got rid of, and hiding himself behind a door, spoke again.

"It's all along of that negro, sir, which I mean the black man," he exclaimed.

"What's the row now?"

"He's been a-cheeking of me, sir."

"It's very odd that you two can't agree."

"You, sir, may say what you like," replied the scout; "but niggers, leastways negroes, is different, and I can't abide a black man when he turns cheeky."

"Will you be off, or not?" cried Jack, taking down a long spear from the wall.

"Cert'n'y, sir," said the scout, who thought it about time to make his escape.

"What's the matter between him and Monday?" asked Harvey.

"Oh! they can't hit it at all. I don't know how it is, but I think one's jealous of the other. Monday hates Buster," replied Jack.

After refreshing the inner man, they proceeded to Harvey's rooms, and found Mr. Clinker, the scout, busily engaged in unpacking his master's portmanteaus.

"Servant, Mr. Harkaway," he exclaimed; "and yours, sir."

"Are you my scout?" asked Harvey.

"Yes, sir; name of Clinker, which Mr. Buster he knows me well. Your father, sir, came down last week, and told me to order all that you would want, and I do 'ope you'll be satisfied."

"Which means that you've bought lots of things he won't want," replied Jack, "and got your commission out of the tradesmen, who are awful harpies to fresh-men."

He walked about, and inspected the various articles in the room.

On the table was a pile of tradesmen's cards.

"Chuck all these in the fire, Dick," he exclaimed. "and lock up your spirits and your wine."

Clinker smiled a ghastly grin.

"You think you've got a key that will fit, don't you?" continued Jack. "But he shall order a patent lock, and then where will you find yourself, Mr. Stinker or Clinker, whichever your name is."

"May I gasp my last, sir," answered the scout, "if I ever robbed a gentleman of so much as a ounce of bacca."

"You may take your affidavit you won't have the chance with us. Put your master's things straight. Mr. Harvey will come with me until his place is fit to go into."

They returned to Harkaway's rooms, where they found a man baiting the monkey with the end of a lighted cigar.

He was tall and fair, with a face like that of a handsome woman, his fair moustache having scarcely dawned upon his lips.

His dress was faultless, though a little loud, but his gentlemanly manner enabled him to carry that off.

"How do, Dawson?" cried Jack. "My friend Harvey. Heard me talk about Harvey? He was with me in the China seas. Harvey, you must know Sir Sydney Dawson."

"Charmed, I'm sure," replied Harvey.

They bowed to one another.

"I've been badgering your monkey till he is as wild as a hawk," exclaimed the baronet.

"Mind Soapy Sam doesn't get the best of you," replied Jack, laughing.

"Not he; I am up to his dodges now. By the way, will your friend Mr. Harvey come to my wine to-night? I have sent you an invitation, and if he doesn't mind the short notice——"

"Not at all," said Harvey. "It is my first day in Oxford, and I am obliged to you for thinking of me."

"Very well. Do you dine in hall?"

"No," said Jack; "we have ordered our mutton at the 'Mitre.'"

"Ah, exactly," said Sir Sydney with a yawn. "The prodigality of freshmen is proverbial."

He was in his second year.

"Now look here, Dawson, you don't dine in hall more than three or four times a week, because you are a gentleman commoner," said Jack, laughing.

"May I ask what that is?" cried Harvey.

"Delighted to give you the information," answered Sir Sydney Dawson. "I have the misfortune to have a handle to my name, and to be the heir to six thousand a year."

"Yes."

"It is not much, but it is something, and I am the prey of the sharks in the 'varsity; I wear a more swell gown than you, and have a tuft to my cap, and pay double fees; that's all."

Soapy Sam now made a raid upon the baronet's cap, which was lying on the table.

"Sit on your ape, will you, Harkaway?" said the baronet.

"I can't," replied Jack, throwing something at the monkey.

"I wish you would, just to oblige me."

"You rile him so. I saw him sneeze just now when you burnt his nose with the end of your weed."

Soapy Sam rushed to the top of the bookcase, which was his favourite perch, and began to pick the tassel of the cap to pieces.

"Now I shall want a new mortar-board," said Sir Sydney. "Never mind; I'll send in the bill to you, and freshmen have always plenty of money."

"Hanged if I have," replied Jack. "My father cuts me down to two hundred a-year."

"Quite enough too. My guardian only gives me that."

"Really! How do you manage?"

"Borrow what I want and go tick. It's easy enough," replied Sir Sydney.

"I'd rather not get into debt, if I can avoid it," said Jack.

"Well, if you have any inclination that way, all I can say is you came to the right place when you ran up to Oxford."

Jack was about to reply, when Monday's grinning face appeared in the doorway.

"Ah! Mast' Harvey, how um do, sare," he cried.

"I'm all right, thank you," replied Harvey. "How do you like Oxford?"

"It very fine place; Monday very much wonder at all he see in England; it nearly drive him mad. Now he get better, only he not like that scout fellow, Buster. Mast' Jack got um Monday, what him want with that Buster? Him no good."

The scout had been listening outside, and putting his head in exclaimed, as he shook his fist—

"You black thief! It's a pity you didn't stay in your own country."

"I can't have you two quarrelling like this," remarked Jack.

"What does he want to call me out of my name for, sir, behind my back?" exclaimed Buster. "Only to look at him gives me a stomachache; he looks like an un-ripe plum."

Jack laughed, as did the others.

"Him steal um brandy, um wines, and um sugar, sare. Um see him take," replied Monday.

"You lying black thief!" exclaimed Buster; "I'll have the law of you."

"Get out," cried Jack; "have your rows outside. Do you hear? Slope!"

The scout retired, grumbling to himself, and Monday buried himself in a cupboard.

Presently Tom Carden came in.

He was a strong and powerfully-built man, just the sort of wiry, good-natured fellow to become the popular captain of a college eight.

Being introduced to Harvey, he looked round and saw some soda and hock.

"Ah," he exclaimed, "sock and hoda. That will just do for me. We are not in training now and may indulge, though you'll find me rather strict, Harkaway, if you come into the St. Aldate's eight."

"Nothing like it," said Jack.

"You're right there. I mean to have the St. Aldate's boat at the head of the river next year, and no mistake about it."

"I'll do my best for St. Aldate's, if you'll honour me with a seat in the tub."

"Tub!" cried Carden, indignantly. "She's the neatest craft that Salter ever put in the water."

"I'm not a boating man, and don't mean to be," observed Sir Sydney; "but I should call our boat the college tub."

"All right, call it the college tub," exclaimed Carden, with a smile. "Pass the sock and hoda, and give me a pight for my life."

"I wish you would not talk in that absurd way," exclaimed Sir Sydney; "it takes a fellow some time to understand you. You're a silly buffoon, Carden."

"What am I? A silly buffoon? That's a nice thing to call a man," replied Carden, laughing.

"Are you coming to my wine to-night?"

"If you're decently civil."

"You will meet Kemp and Hall, and a lot more you know. Jolly fellows."

"I like jolly fellows, so I'll come," answered the captain of the St. Aldate's eight.

Shortly afterwards the party broke up and Jack took Harvey to the Mitre Hotel, where they had what he called a neat little feed.

After a cup of coffee and a cigarette, they proceeded to Sir Sydney Dawson's rooms, where his guests had begun to assemble.

"You will find it rather a swell crowd," remarked Jack.

"All right; I flatter myself I know how to behave," answered Harvey.

CHAPTER III.

JACK'S FIRST WINE.

JACK and Harvey were shown into a sumptuously-furnished apartment, upon the contents of which money had been lavishly expended.

A variety of wines were upon the table, with all sorts of biscuits and preserved fruits.

Olives, however, seemed to be the most popular.

A box of cigars, which cost four guineas, invited the attention of smokers.

Sir Sydney Dawson had perched himself on the back of a chair, in which acrobatic position he contrived to balance himself with considerable skill, and not without difficulty.

"Here are our nautical friends," he exclaimed; "but why this absence of nigger and monkey? Send for them, Harkaway. We can't get on at all without our nigger and monkey. Soapy Sam and the Black Prince are necessary to complete our happiness, and secure the harmony of the evening."

"I'll see about it presently," replied Jack.

He walked over to a tall, effeminate-looking young man, with a pale complexion, and having his hair parted in the middle.

"How do, Kemp?" he said.

"Ah, how do?" replied Kemp, with a peculiar smile. "Allow me to introduce you to my friend, Mr. Frank Davis, of Singapore."

Jack stared in amazement.

Before him was his sworn and determined enemy.

Davis had told him that he was going to England to complete his education at a university.

He had added that wherever Jack was, he would still hate him, and seek for his revenge.

Jack little expected to meet him so soon.

Nor had he the remotest idea that he would come across him at Oxford.

That it was Davis of Singapore he had no doubt.

He had lost one ear.

Making a cold and distant bow, Davis replied—

“Mr. Harkaway and I have met before.”

“Really!” exclaimed Kemp. “I’m glad of that. It’s such a nuisance helping fellows to talk. Davis is not in our college. He’s a Merton man, but I daresay you will often run against one another.”

Davis and Jack glared at each other.

It was an unpleasant meeting for both of them.

Muttering something about hoping that Mr. Davis would enjoy life at the university, Jack shuffled away to the other end of the room.

He took a seat near Harvey.

The latter was drinking claret, but Jack drank port in tumblers.

“I say, old fellow,” exclaimed Harvey, “aren’t you putting it on rather too strong? Stick to this claret.”

“I’m upset,” answered Jack.

“Why?”

“I have seen Davis.”

“Singapore Davis?”

“Yes.”

“The man with one ear?” said Harvey, in surprise.

“Yes, my enemy. I suppose Hunston will turn up next.”

“Where is he?”

“In this room. He has come over to England, and is at Merton.”

“That’s funny.”

“I tell you,” said Jack, “I don’t like it. Davis is with Kemp, and I have taken a strong feeling against Kemp. They are friends, and they will get up something for me.”

“Avoid him as much as possible; he can’t do you much harm,” answered Harvey.

"I will, you may depend upon that, though I can't forget the strong cause he has to hate me."

While Jack was talking, Kemp had, at Sir Sydney Dawson's request, gone to Jack's room to tell Monday to bring the monkey over.

"And look here, Monday," said Kemp; "there is half-a-crown for you."

"Thank um, sare," replied Monday.

"Don't you think if I were to paint your face a little, it would make you look prettier," continued Kemp.

"Paint um face? How um do that, sare?"

"Oh! it won't hurt; it will wash off again. You'll be a white man then. It's only a lark."

On a table was a box of colours, with brushes.

Taking one of the latter, Kemp mixed some white paint with water.

Monday sat in a chair, and allowed his face to be painted white.

The effect was ludicrous enough.

Kemp next put a college cap on the monkey, which Monday carried in his arm, and they returned to Sir Sydney's room.

The fun was growing fast and furious.

A shout of laughter greeted the entrance of Monday and the monkey.

Kemp tied an empty wine-bottle to the animal's tail and let him go.

Soapy Sam rushed up a bookcase, on the top of which was some valuable china, all of which fell down with a smash.

The monkey, with considerable cleverness, untied the bottle, and threw it in the middle of the table, capsizing a stand of figs.

"I say," cried Sir Sydney, "this is too bad. Stop your monkey's tricks, Harkaway."

"You would have him, and you must put up with him," answered Jack.

"Where's his keeper? Here Monday, Tuesday! What's your name?" exclaimed Sir Sydney.

Monday stepped forward.

"What um want, sare?" he said.

"You're not Monday. He's black, and you're white."

"They paint um face, sare."

"Who did? Has some one been whitewashing you?"

"Mr. Kemp, him do it, sare," replied Monday.

"Well, look after the Bishop. I can't have all my crockery ruined."

Monday promised to do his best, and shook his fist at Soapy Sam, who retaliated with absurd grimaces, which, as he still wore the college cap, made every one who saw him burst with renewed laughter.

Sir Sydney Dawson proposed a game at loo.

There were a dozen or fourteen men in the room, and the table was soon cleared.

About nine sat down.

Jack, who had been drinking more port than he was accustomed to, sat next to Kemp, and, there being a vacant chair, he declared that the monkey should play.

"Nonsense!" said Kemp. "Who ever heard of a monkey playing at cards?"

"I didn't ask you," replied Jack. "I am Dawson's guest, and he can do what he likes in his own place."

"Upon my word, it is a strange proposal," said Sir Sydney, hesitatingly.

"He can pay if he loses, and perhaps that is more than everyone can," continued Jack.

"Order, gentlemen," said Sir Sydney, adding—"let the Bishop play."

Jack called Soapy Sam, who was much attached to his master and came down at once.

"Here; sit between Kemp and me," said Jack.

The monkey gravely took his seat.

The cards were dealt, the loo being limited to three-and-sixpence.

Jack looked at the monkey's cards, and turned them up for him.

Kemp insisted that it was not fair, but no one paid any attention to him.

It was a novelty for a monkey to play cards, and, like overgrown boys as they were, they liked anything new.

Besides, Kemp was known to be irritable, and they were pleased at seeing him get angry.

As the game progressed, Kemp was very lucky in turning up kings and aces, and won largely.

The seventh round was a general loo.

Kemp had one hand on the table, and the monkey

suddenly, making a great chattering, put his paws on Kemp's hand.

"Call the brute off," exclaimed Kemp, turning very pale.

"Lift up your hand, and he won't hurt you," exclaimed Jack.

"I can't."

"Rot!" said Jack, pulling his arm on one side.

On the table was an ace.

"Hullo!" cried Sir Sydney, gravely.

"The beast must have put it there," said Kemp, in confusion; "that's the worst of having a monkey by one's side; they are always playing some tricks or other."

Jack whistled.

"Do you think I cheat?" asked Kemp savagely.

"No," replied Sir Sydney; "we don't say that; go on. It looks funny, that's all."

"I'll not play another card, unless the brute is removed."

Jack was very grave, and calling Monday, he told him to take the Bishop home.

"Now," he said, "you've nothing to grumble at, Mr. Kemp. I am by your side, and the monkey is gone."

"That's right. Whose deal is it?" asked Kemp.

The game proceeded.

It was remarked for a time the Kemp's luck deserted him.

After a while, however, it came back again, and he swept the stakes towards him with irritating frequency.

Without seeming to do so, Jack watched him with the eye of an hawk.

The players were getting excited.

"Club law, knock in," exclaimed Sir Sydney.

Every one played carefully and in silence.

All at once, Jack, whose face was flushed, and who trembled with excitement, seized a sharp two-pronged silver fruit fork.

Kemp's hand was on the table, as it had been when the monkey pounced upon him.

Before him were three cards, one of which he had turned.

Clubs were trumps, and he had taken miss.

In an instant Jack dashed down the fork, which ran

through the back of Kemp's hand, and, entering the wood, pinned him to the table.

A yell of pain broke from him.

This was followed by a cry of surprise and horror.

Every one sprang to his feet.

"What have you done?" exclaimed Sir Sydney.

"I saw him cheating; and if the ace of clubs is not found under his hand, I will forfeit a hundred pounds!"

The men crowded round Kemp.

The wretched man was writhing in agony, and the red blood oozed up from his wound.

"Look out, all of you," said Jack. "He can't say it was the monkey this time!"

Sir Sydney Dawson with some difficulty extricated the fork.

When it was removed, and the bleeding hand lifted up, there was the ace of clubs.

Kemp had evidently taken it from the pack when shuffling.

The prongs of the fork had gone through it, so that there could not possibly be any mistake.

Kemp wrapped his hand in his handkerchief.

"Well, gentlemen, are you satisfied?" asked Jack.

It is a horrible thing among gentlemen for one of their number to be caught cheating at cards.

"If Mr. Kemp can give any explanation of what has occurred, I for one, shall be glad to hear him," replied Sir Sydney.

"And I also," remarked Tom Carden.

So also said half a dozen others.

Kemp remained obstinately silent.

"Have you nothing to say?" cried Sir Sydney.

With his unhurt hand, Kemp turned all the money he had won out of his pockets on to the table.

"If you think I cheated," he exclaimed, "there is the money, and something more; divide it amongst you."

"But the card. How did you come to have one more than you were entitled to, and an ace into the bargain?"

"It's my belief, Mr. Harkaway put it there," replied Kemp.

"That is too ridiculous," said Harvey.

"I don't know. He has been among savages, and I have heard, from Mr. Davis, of strange things he did in Singapore."

Jack was about to make an indignant answer.

"Don't speak; leave it all to me," said Sir Sydney Dawson.

"If you wish it——"

"I do. You, Mr. Kemp, have been clearly bowled out, and can give no satisfactory explanation for your conduct, which you make worse by accusing a man of honour. All that remains for me to do now is to request you to leave my rooms, and be good enough never to enter them again."

At this decision of Sir Sydney Dawson's Kemp became livid.

He looked round him, and for a moment it did not seem that he had a friend in the room.

He was mistaken.

Frank Davis approached.

"Let me give you my arm," he said; "you must see a doctor."

They walked away together in silence.

It was not until they were gone that those who remained ventured to speak.

CHAPTER IV.

MR. SCRAPER GETS SCREWED UP.

"RASCALLY thing to do," said Sir Sydney.

"Beastly! infamous!" remarked Fabian Hall.

"No doubt of it. Clear as a pikestaff," exclaimed Harvey.

"I shall cut the man dead whenever I meet him," observed Tom Carden.

"Serve him right, too," exclaimed Jack; adding, "was I right in what I did?"

"Certainly," answered Sir Sydney.

"The Bishop put me up to it first of all," continued Jack. "He saw Mr. Kemp palming the cards, and

thought that he wanted to have a lark with him. I knew Soapy Sam was right in what he did, and I was only waiting for a chance to drop down on Kemp like a hundred of bricks."

"Well, he's knocked into a three-cornered hat now," said Sir Sydney.

"I hope you are not put out on my account," said Jack. "I am the last man in the world to get up any unpleasantness in another fellow's rooms, but I can't stand cheating at cards."

"No one blames you," said Carden. "Let me make a champagne chup."

"Not a bad idea," said Harvey.

While the champagne cup was brewing, Jack related how he had once, on board ship, seen a midshipman clobbered within an inch of his life for cheating.

The wine circulated, and every one began to get very merry.

"I can't play any more after what has occurred," replied Dawson. "What shall we do?"

"Go and screw Scrapper up," said an undergraduate in his second year.

"Splendid!" replied Sir Sydney Dawson. "Get a hammer and gimlet and some screws."

They were all excited by wine.

Mr. Scrapper was an unpopular tutor, and they did not care for consequences.

"Good-night," said Fabian Hall to Jack.

"Are you off?"

"Yes. I'm a reading man, and have my way to make in the world, you know."

"Well, what of that?"

"Oh! I know how these things end, and I don't want to be rusticated."

"What's that?"

"Why, sent away for a year," replied Hall.

"Is anything likely to happen?" asked Jack.

"Of course; the dean may come out. The college authorities stand a good deal, but St. Aldate's has been going ahead a little too much lately."

"Well, good-night, if you won't stop."

Hall went away and Jack followed the others into the quad.

Mr. Scraper had rooms on the ground floor, and his door was soon screwed up, so that it was impossible to open it.

Then the men went into the quad, and called out "Fire!" throwing stones at the windows.

At length Mr. Scraper woke up, and finding he could not get out, looked from one of his windows at the turbulent crowd below.

He was in his nightcap.

A storm of laughter greeted him.

Some were playing at leapfrog, others singing scraps of songs, and the greatest confusion prevailed everywhere.

A friend of Dawson's who was a Brasenose man, sank on his knees, overcome by wine, and began to recite a portion of Demosthenes' oration on the crown.

Dawson took him up in his arms, and carried him to the outer quad.

"What are you going to do with him?" asked Jack.

"Put him in the fountain; he isn't well," answered Sir Sydney.

"A bath will cool him; very thoughtful of you."

"Isn't it? Take his legs; he's heavy."

Jack took the Brasenose man's legs and carried him to the fountain, where they deposited him in the water, his head leaning gracefully against the side.

Then they returned to their own quadrangle.

Mr. Scraper was uttering loud cries, firmly believing that a dreadful fire was raging somewhere.

The dean heard the noise, and summoning two tutors, went with the porter, carrying a lantern, to the scene of the disturbance.

"What is the matter, Mr. Scraper?" asked the dean.

"I am screwed up, sir," said Mr. Scraper.

"Really, this is very disgraceful."

"Can you tell me if there is a fire?"

"Certainly not; no suspicion of anything of the sort," answered the dean.

"Oh! thank you. I will retire to rest again, though I should like to see the authors of the outrage perpetrated upon me properly punished."

"It shall be done," said the dean.

Just as Jack and Sir Sydney returned, they saw the

dean and his tutors rushing up a staircase after Ton Carden and Harvey.

"Better slope," said Sir Sydney.

"Stop a bit," cried Jack; "I want to see the fun out."

And he sent another stone through Mr. Scrapper's window.

"Well, I'm off. I've been in lots of rows, but I never stop to be nailed," said Sir Sydney.

"Wait for me."

"Not I. If you won't come, you must take the consequences."

Sir Sydney ran off, and Jack was left standing alone.

The dean had been unable to catch anyone, and he knocked at the door of a man who was going up for the examination called "greats."

Now, when a man is reading hard for his "greats," with a wet towel bound round his forehead, and drinking nothing but green tea he doesn't like a noise in the quad.

It very naturally riles him to hear rows going on.

Thinking that the rioters among the fast set were coming to worry him, he took up a pail full of dirty water.

Opening his door, he unceremoniously emptied it over the head of the dean.

Rushing towards him, the dean exclaimed—

"How dare you, sir?"

Splutter! splutter!

"What's the meaning of this extraordinary conduct, sir? Do you know who I am?"

Recognising the dean the reading man explained and apologised.

Clean towels were offered and accepted.

The dean and his satellites descended the staircase.

His temper was not improved by a bath of dirty water.

A dark frown had settled on the classic brow of the dean of St. Aldate's.

He had been roused, defied, insulted.

What he wanted now, was a victim upon whom to pour out the vial of his wrath.

Jack was the only man left in the quad.

He was standing on the gravel, and enjoying himself in taking cool shots with pebbles at Mr. Scrapper's windows.

A slight smash announced that a graceful hole was made.

"Hit it again," said Jack. "My practice is improving. Wonder where Scrapper is? Fire! fire!"

The dean bore down upon him with academic ire.

"Your name and college, sir?" said the dean, firmly.

Jack turned round in a half tipsy manner, and surveyed the head of his college blandly.

"Ah! pardon me, I haven't the honour," he replied.

"Sir!" cried the dean.

"I never talk to people unless I'm introduced."

"I am the dean of St. Aldate's, sir."

"Indeed?" said Jack, coolly throwing another stone at Mr. Scrapper's doomed windows. "Very inconvenient time to call upon a man. Can't you come to-morrow?"

"Are you aware what you are doing?" thundered the dean.

"Oh, perfectly. I am thoroughly *compos mentis*, and engaged in a work of charity."

"Work of what?"

"Charity, my dear sir, charity, which we have high authority for believing covers a multitude of sins."

"Perhaps you will explain yourself further, Mr.——"

"Harkaway, of St. Aldate's."

"A freshman, I think?"

"Well, sir; I must admit, I am a little fresh to-night. My first wine you see, Mr. Dean," said Jack.

"And this work of charity?" said the dean, who could not help smiling.

"Ah! exactly, I had forgotten."

Another stone rattled against the tutor's window.

"An obstinate and misguided man, rejoicing, I believe, in the came of Scrapper—S c r a p—no, S c r a p e r, Scrapper, I like to be precise, sir—lives in those rooms."

"Well?"

"Some gentlemen of this college have foolishly screwed him up, sir; his oak is hermitically—metically, I mean—sealed, and as I am informed that the college has been set on fire in three places, it follows that the wretched creature will be burnt to death."

"I see no smoke," replied the dean.

"Fact, I assure you. If the flames have not burst forth, they are sm-smouldering."

"Go to your room, Mr. Harkaway, and oblige me with a visit to-morrow morning," replied the dean.

"Thank you, I breakfast with a friend; fried gudgeon at ten. I shall shirk chapel. Say the afternoon, and I'll drive you over to Sandford," replied Jack.

"You're not master of yourself, young gentleman," said the dean, severely.

"Beg your pardon," exclaimed Jack. "I'm all there at this moment, and could twist your arm into a Spanish fox, and every hair in your head should bristle like rope yarn. I haven't been three years and thirty-six months at sea for nothing."

"Porter," cried the dean. "See Mr. Harkaway to his rooms."

"Yes, sir," replied the porter, holding his lantern near Jack.

The dean with his attendant tutor moved away; the disturbance having quieted itself rather than been put down.

"Don't go, old fla," said Jack.

The dean stalked along in dignified silence.

"Well, if you must go, you must. Good-night, old cock; and when next I crook my elbow, I'll wish you luck."

The porter was greatly scandalised.

"It's the dean, sir; you mustn't do it," he said, in a tone of remonstrance.

"But I've done it. It's only my playful way," replied Jack.

With the porter's assistance, he regained his rooms, and telling him if he called in the morning he would give him something, he entered.

A lamp was alight on the table, and by its light he undressed, and was soon fast asleep.

CHAPTER V.

JACK IS "GATED."

At about nine o'clock the next morning, Jack's scout stood by his bedside with a long glass containing something of an effervescing nature.

"Copper hot, sir?" said the scout, with a grin.

"What the deuce has that to do with you?" replied Jack, waking up.

"Nothing much, sir; young gents often get hot coppers after a wine."

"What's that in your hand?"

"S and B, sir."

"Ah! Soda and Brandy. Give it here."

Jack drank the refreshing draught.

He was not at all well; his head ached, and his mouth was parched and dry.

"What's the time?" he asked.

"Gone nine, sir."

"Then I'm too late for chapel."

"They say you carried on last night, sir," said the scout; "and you've got to go before the dean, for screwing of Mr. Scraper's door up, and then chucking of stones at him in his night-cap."

"I have a dim recollection of meeting the dean," replied Jack. "What an ass I made of myself."

"Have any breakfast, sir?"

"Yes, fried soles, eels or gudgeon; anything you can get that's light."

Buster nodded, and in half-an-hour Jack had a good breakfast, washed down with some of the buttery ale.

He sported his oak, and would see nobody.

At eleven he dressed and went to the dean's house, feeling rather uncomfortable.

The dean was a good-natured looking, gentlemanly man, and asked his visitor to sit down, as he wished to speak to him.

Jack did so.

"Does it not occur to you, Mr. Harkaway, that you are making a bad beginning, having been up so short a time?" he said.

"Yes, sir."

"That's candid, at all events. I am not disposed to be very angry with you, but I must mark my sense of displeasure at your conduct."

There was a pause.

"I promise you I will not be so foolish again, sir," said Jack.

"You will consider yourself confined to your college

for one week, and I hope you will remember your promise. Had you been in your second year, I should most certainly have sent you down to your friends for some time. Go ; and be wise in time."

Jack was glad to get off so easily.

He returned to his rooms, where he found Sir Sydney Dawson, Harvey and Carden.

"Well?" said Sir Sydney. "You have been hauled up before the dean, I hear."

"Yes," replied Jack; "and it's all your fault."

"Why didn't you run when I did?"

"Because I didn't choose to!"

"Don't get riled, old man," said Sir Sydney. "What have they done to you?"

"Gated me for a week."

"That won't kill you."

"No, I don't suppose it will. But it is a bad start, and I'm rather ashamed of it," said Jack.

Finding he was not in a good humour, Sir Sydney and Carden took their leave.

When he was alone with Harvey, Jack said—

"I shall make use of my time and pitch in to the fourth book of Euclid."

Harvey did not stop long.

He had a lecture to attend, and had promised Carden to go down in the eight.

A week passes slowly when one is confined to a certain spot, and after Jack had been in college three days he got tired.

Sir Sydney invited him to drive over to Blenheim with him in his tandem.

Jack wanted to know how he could get out, and was told that half-a-sovereign given to the porter would make that functionary shut his eyes.

After some deliberation Jack consented to go.

He had a strong wish to see Woodstock and Blenheim, and he got out of college with Sir Sydney.

The tandem was waiting for them a little way over the bridge, near Magdalen College, and not far from a small tavern, past the turnpike, called the "Cape of Good Hope."

They mounted and started at a spanking pace for Blenheim.

Here they passed a few hours very agreeably, and turned to go home.

About a mile from Oxford, they met Harvey, who had been running up the road.

Sir Sydney, who was a splendid whip, instantly pulled up his team.

"Are you in training for a mile race?" he asked, seeing Harvey was out of breath.

"No," said Harvey. "I have come to warn Harkaway."

"About what?"

"Kemp and Davis have been to the dean, and told him that Harkaway is out of college."

"The beasts!" said Jack, in a tone of disgust.

"That's awkward," exclaimed Sir Sydney. "What is to be done?"

"I've arranged it all. Both gates are guarded, and it is impossible to get in that way; but Fabian Hall's windows are on the first floor, and look into the street. He has promised to wait with a tablecloth, and haul him up."

"That will do," said Sir Sydney.

"Jack must get back to his rooms, put on a dressing-gown, and shove his feet into a tub of hot water, and swear he has a cold. The water is all ready for him, and Monday has got a candle for him to tallow his nose with."

"Bravo, Dick!" exclaimed Jack: "you are something like a friend."

"Hang on behind," said Sir Sydney; "I'll soon trot you back to college."

Harvey jumped up, and in five minutes he and Jack were walking over the bridge, while Sir Sydney took the horses back to the stables.

They managed to reach Fabian Hall's rooms, which Jack entered with some little difficulty.

Then he regained his own room without being observed, put on a dressing-gown, and inserted his feet in hot water.

Half-an-hour afterwards Sir Sydney Dawson passed through the gate, humming a tune.

The dean was standing near the porter's lodge, and at once stopped him.

Sir Sidney lifted his cap.

"Where is your companion?" inquired the dean.

"Who do you mean, sir?" asked the baronet, carelessly.

"Mr. Harkaway, whom I have confined to his college for a week."

"In his room, I should think, sir. He had a violent attack of influenza this morning, and I should think it highly improbable he had ventured out."

"Indeed! I will visit him."

The dean, in some confusion, went to Jack's room, and was instantly admitted.

The dean was considerably surprised to see Harkaway, apparently in all the agonies of a bad cold.

"Oh, excuse me," he exclaimed; "I understood that you had disobeyed my orders."

"In what way, sir?" inquired Jack.

"By quitting your college."

"In my present state, I am scarcely likely to be so rash," replied Jack, adding, "Monday, bring me my candle; I must tallow my nose."

"Dear me! You are very unwell; you have lost your voice. I can see that my informants have either deceived me or themselves. Pardon my intrusion. I wish you better."

The dean bowed, and so did Jack.

When the door closed, Jack called Monday.

"Is he gone?" he asked.

"Him gone. All right, sare," replied the black.

"Take this confounded bath away; then bring me a mug of beer from the butler, and hand me that box of Partagas."

With a cigar in his mouth, and one of his legs thrown over the arm of his chair, and a smoking-cap set jauntily on his head, Jack looked a very different person from the one the dean had seen, in the last stage of assumed influenza.

Harvey came in soon afterwards, and said, with a smile—

"You were not long getting in form."

"I've sold the dean," replied Jack.

"How did he look?"

"Floored. I was so much like the real thing when in

the bath, that he was a settled member directly, and apologised."

"I'm glad of that. If you had been bowled out it would have been rather a serious thing."

"So it would ; and I know now what to expect from Messrs. Kemp and Davis," said Jack.

"They are both full against you, and any dirty trick they can play you they will," replied Harvey.

"Let them. I have cultivated a sort of mental gymnastics, which enables me to throw care off my mind. You can't always be eighteen and in your first year at Oxford," cried Jack.

"No more you can ; there is nothing like being jolly."

The remainder of the time during which Jack was confined to college passed rapidly.

He remembered his first wine, and took care not to drink too much again.

Towards the end of November, the news ran through the college that there was to be a fair in a field outside the town.

Sir Sydney Dawson never lost anything of the sort.

He asked Jack to go down with him and see the fun.

Jack agreed to do so, and, with Harvey and Tom Carden, they made a party of four.

Fabian Hall, who heard of their intention, came to Jack's rooms.

He had taken quite a fancy to our hero, and his caution, common sense, and experience were often of much use to him.

"So you are going to the fair?" he said.

"Yes. Why not?" replied Jack.

"I suppose you think you will see some fun?"

"No doubt."

"That isn't what Dawson's going for."

"Isn't it? What then?"

"He is going for a row."

"All the better," exclaimed Jack. "I like rows."

"Did you ever hear of town and gown at Oxford?" asked Fabian.

"Do you mean a stand-up fight between the townsmen, that's the cads, bargees, etc., and the gentlemen or gownsmen, that's ourselves?"

"Precisely."

"Well, what harm is there in that?"

"A good deal, perhaps, if the proctor and his bulldogs catch you," replied Fabian.

"Who is the proctor?" asked Jack, who had very vague ideas respecting this important personage in the university.

"He is very much like an adjutant in a regiment. He is the head constable of the 'varsity, and his marshals, or, as we call them, bulldogs, are the police."

"Well, we must dodge him, that's all."

"It won't be very pleasant, I can tell you, if you are collared, and the proctor exclaims—'Your names and college, gentlemen?' You have been before the dean once, you know."

"Don't croak; I'm going to the fair. Come with us?" said Jack.

"Not I," replied Fabian Hall. "I'm positive Dawson will kick up a shindy, and the town hates us so, they only want an excuse to pitch in."

"I can mill a bargee, and as to a counter-jumper, why, I'd soon polish him off," said Jack, contemptuously.

"That's what most fellows say till they find out their mistake," answered Fabian.

In spite of this warning, Jack persisted in his determination to go.

The bare idea of a fight between town and gown was delightful.

"Dawson is a brick," he said to himself, "and I'll stick to him through thick and thin."

It was in this state of mind that he, with Sir Sydney, Harvey, and Tom Carden, started for the fair.

They had just left hall, where they had dined, and locking their arms, walked four abreast down the High Street.

Everybody had to get out of their way.

At a small and secluded tavern they stopped to bait.

Some brandy and water made them more valiant than ever.

Each talked of what he would do if the cads dared to show fight.

On their way they met several men of different colleges, all wending the same way.

"The 'varsity is coming up strong," exclaimed Sir Sydney.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FAIR.

WHEN the four Oxford men got out of the High Street, they walked in pairs.

Jack took Tom Carden's arm, and Harvey walked on ahead with Sir Sydney Dawson.

"Have you ever been in a town and gown row?" asked Jack of his companion.

"Yes, once," replied Carden. "It was last fifth of November, and the town had made up their minds for it."

"Did you lick?"

"I can't say we did. All I know is I got the sweetest hiding I ever had in my life, and could not show up for a fortnight."

"How was that? I thought a gentleman could always lick a cad."

"Don't run away with any mistaken idea of that sort, my dear fellow," replied Carden.

"Why not?" asked Jack.

"Well, it is easy enough to explain. You tackle a bargee, and if he's got more bone and muscle and wind than you, it follows that you must go to the wall."

"That's a Q. E. D.," replied Jack, with a laugh, "as we say in Euclid."

"Besides," added Carden, "the town is generally stronger in numbers; and then there is the chance of meeting the proctor and his bulldogs. A town and gown row isn't all violets."

"I mean to have a go in," said Jack, "whether or no. Just let a townsman rile me, and I'll let him have what for."

"You're young, and had better keep out of it."

"Never mind that. I'm as strong as a young lion, and know how to fight. My fists are as hard as iron through knocking about at sea."

"That may be."

"Will you tell me that science goes for nothing?"

"Not exactly; but brute force isn't to be sneezed at, my boy," answered Carden.

He took out his pipe.

"Got any 'bacca?" he asked.

Jack handed him his pouch.

"I shall poke a smipe, or, as you would say, smoke a pipe. Give me your lox of bights."

Jack handed him a box of lights, and he smoked calmly like the philosopher he was.

Making up his mind that he wouldn't funk the cads as he termed the townspeople, Jack longed to reach the fair.

It was held in a field a little way out of the town.

As they approached, there was a great blaze of naphtha lamps, a babel of voices, and a perpetual striking of big drums and gongs.

"Here we are," exclaimed Jack, joyfully.

He sniffed the battle afar off, like a warhorse.

Sir Sydney pushed his way rudely through the crowd, provoking more than one indignant exclamation.

Stopping at a stall, he said—

"Fill your pockets with nuts and oranges."

"What for?" said Jack.

"To get up a row with. You do as I tell you."

They did so, and moved towards a large erection, in which a theatrical representation went on every quarter of an hour.

Bang! bang! went the gong.

"Walk up, ladies and gentlemen, walk up!" exclaimed a man upon the platform. "Sixpence is the charge for the finest performance of ancient or modern days."

"What's the play?" asked Sir Sydney.

"The 'Triple Murder; or, Blood for Blood,'" answered the showman; "being the story of the hereditary curse which descended from father to son, and heventually hextinguished two of the first families in Venice. Walk up, gentlemen, walk up, and see the show."

Several university men were going in, and Dawson said—

"We may as well have a tanner's worth, and start here."

"So you've made up your mind for a row?" cried Carden.

"Of course. It's what we came for, isn't it?"

"Speak for yourself."

"You're not going to leave us," said Jack, in a tone of reproach.

"Not I; if you're on for a shindy, I'll see you through it as well as I can."

They entered the show, which contained about two hundred people.

"About forty of these were Oxford men.

The mob consisted of men, women, and children, who had come out to enjoy themselves.

A slight hissing arose as Sir Sydney and his friends made their appearance.

Sir Sydney took off his cap, and bowed to the company with mock politeness.

They pushed their way to the front, where four youngsters about fifteen had seated themselves.

"Oblige me by getting out of that," said Sir Sydney.

"We shan't," replied one of the youths. "We've paid our coin, and we've as much right here as you."

"More," said another, "as we were here first."

"Did you hear me?" continued Sir Sydney, in the same quiet, insolent tone.

"Yes."

"Then perhaps you did not understand me. I want these seats for myself and friends."

"You won't have them, old chap," replied the biggest of the youths.

Turning to his friends, Sir Sydney said—

"Each of you take one, and eject him with no more violence than is absolutely necessary. I should be sorry to hurt the town at this early stage of the proceedings."

He set the example and seizing the nearest lad by the collar, threw him away as if he had been a piece of wood.

The others then were turned out with equal celerity.

They picked themselves up, and stood stupidly staring at their aggressors, who were too big to fight with.

"Bravo!" cried several gownsmen. "Well done, St. Aldate's! Well done, Oxford!"

"Shame, shame!" shouted the rest of the audience.

Sir Sydney rose and, looking round him with a smiling countenance, bowed in the same polite manner.

A storm of hissing arose, at which Sir Sydney bowed again, as if in receipt of a compliment, and then sat down.

"Bravo, our side!" he muttered.

The youths slunk away, and were provided with seats at the back of the booth.

Here they were joined by several acquaintances, who began to talk about what they would give the gowmsmen when they got them outside.

"That's first blood to us," said Tom Carden, to Jack, "but they'll make us pay for it presently."

The place being full, the proprietor gave the order to close the show, and the performance of "The Triple Murder" commenced.

"Up goes the rag," remarked Sir Sydney, as the curtain ascended.

A truculent-looking bravo was discovered with a dagger tightly clutched in his right hand.

"Berlood, berlood, I must and will have berlood," he cried.

Sir Sydney Dawson whispered to his three friends—

"Get out your oranges, and plant him well on the nose."

He was the first to throw.

Struck on the nose, the bravo looked round angrily.

"None of your larks," he said, to the audience.

An orange struck him in the eye at this juncture, and being soft, it broke, the pulp going over him.

"I say, stash it!" he cried. "The play can't go on, if—oh! my eye! Oh! crikey, there's another. Gentlemen, stop it, it ain't good enough."

Roars of laughter proceeded from the collegians, but the townspeople were very indignant.

They had paid their money to see a show, and they wanted their money's worth.

In addition to this, there was a bad feeling existing between them and the Oxonians.

It slumbered like a tiny spark, but it only wanted a little fanning to make it burst out into a blaze.

Hearing the disturbance, the manager came forward, and was greeted with a shower of nuts.

"Really, gentlemen," he said, "this conduct is most unseemly."

"Go to bed," said Jack.

"Oh it's you, is it?" asked the manager. "I'll make an hexample of you."

"Come on," Jack replied; "I am ready for you."

Sir Sydney Dawson rose with his usual bland smile.

"I have to request," he said, "that the performance proceed. We are here to improve our minds by high-class acting; let the first brigand go on."

"Hear, hear!" said Jack.

"It's my opinion, you're all of a kidney, you Oxford gents, and if there is any more row, I shall shut up the show," said the manager.

"Turn 'em out! Turn 'em out!" cried the audience.

A stout, plethoric-looking man, stood up in the centre of the booth.

"Sir," he replied, "I have been an inhabitant of Oxford for fifteen years, and I never saw such a disgraceful scene in a public place of entertainment before."

"I quite agree with you, sir," said Sir Sydney.

"That is more than I do with you, sir," said the plethoric gentleman. "I have been an inhabitant of Oxford for——"

"You told us that before."

"I repeat it, and I will add that you are a disgrace to the peerage, for I perceive that you are a gentleman commoner by the golden tassel to your cap."

"Wrong again, old boy. I wear a tuft, but I am not in the peerage," said Sir Sydney.

"Then you're an impostor."

"You're a very rude old man. Have an orange?"

One, dexterously thrown, struck him on the forehead.

The old man gesticulated violently.

"That's an assault," he said. "I'll find out his name and college. I'll have him up for it. You are all witness to the assault."

"You bald-headed old stag, shut up," replied Sir Sydney.

"I will not be put down by clamor," said the irate party.

"No one wants you to."

"I am a respectable member of society."

"Behave as such then," answered Sir Sydney.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen, is the performance to proceed or not?" asked the manager, imploringly.

"Certainly not to-night," answered Sir Sydney. "I've been insulted, and unless an apology is made by the old party with the bladder sort of head, I shall not allow you to go on."

The indignation of the audience now reached its height.

"A pretty thing indeed," said one.

"Very nice goings-on," remarked another.

"Turn them out. Come on, wire in together. I'll make one," replied a third.

The aspect of affairs became menacing.

As for the manager he did not know what to do.

CHAPTER VII.

TOWN AND GOWN.

EVERYBODY in the booth began to talk at once, and the confusion became general.

The manager tore his hair, and in vain implored silence.

It was impossible for the play to go on.

Turning his head towards the door, Jack saw that about fifty townsmen were gathering together in that direction, as if to prevent the gown from getting out.

While the two sections were still quiet, the match required to set the combustible materials in a flame arrived.

It came in the shape of an undergraduate, who was known all through Oxford for his fighting propensities.

He had studied the noble art of self-defence under Nat Langham, and once on a race-course he had beaten Jem Mace's Wolf, as a black prize-fighter was called, in a fair stand-up mill.

His name was Dropmore.

It was a peculiarly happy name for two reasons.

He was fond of his beer, and could always take more than most people, and seldom refused a drop more.

In addition to that, when engaged in a street row, he could drop more than any body else.

Pushing his way in, he was stopped by the money-taker, who said—

"Tell you, sir, the show is closed. You can't go in."

"But I am in, my good fellow," replied Dropmore.

He was a Brasenose man, and stood fully six feet one

in his socks. Tall, handsome, brawny, herculean, he was the very beau ideal of a man.

"You'll have to go back," said the attendant.

"Shall I?"

"If you don't I'll make you."

"What will you do?"

"Put you out."

Dropmore looked at him contemptuously.

"Why, you dirty little hang-dog-looking hound," he exclaimed, "I'll knock you into the middle of next week in a brace of shakes. Get out of my gaslight."

The man, however, was not wise in his generation.

He put his hand on Dropmore's arm.

In an instant Dropmore had him by the collar, and swung him in mid-air.

"Don't waste him," said Jack, "kill a cad with him."

The devil was in Dropmore that night.

Jack's suggestion was not lost upon him.

Laying hold of the wretched man by the seat of his breeches, as well as by the collar of his coat, he swung him backwards and forwards once or twice, then he threw him into the middle of the audience.

He fell on two old ladies who were quietly munching biscuits.

They uttered a shriek of pain and fainted. The townspeople could bear no more.

At a signal from the manager, the curtain was lowered.

The first brigand retired to solace himself with a pint of porter.

A dozen townsmen rushed upon Dropmore, who took them fairly, one down the other come on.

"Row! row!" cried Jack, jumping up.

A tremendous riot ensued.

The town attacked the gown wherever they could find them.

Sir Sydney Dawson touched Jack on the shoulder.

"Steady," he said. "No fighting now, unless you can help it."

"I want to have a go in," replied Jack.

"So you shall presently. Wait till we get outside."

"Why?"

"Because there are women and children here. If it were not for that, I would soon smash the place up."

There was a frightful rush to the doors.

Dropmore raised his voice.

"Sit down, gown," he exclaimed. "Let the women-kind clear out. I'm all right."

The collegians retained their seats.

It was clear that Dropmore was fighting against large odds.

He had placed his back against the wall, and managed to hold his own, however.

The manager turned the lights out, which increased the uproar.

Five minutes elapsed, and as the theatre was nearly empty, Dropmore exclaimed—

"Come along, you fellows. Now's our time."

The Oxford men rose, and made their way to the platform.

This was about five feet from the ground, and the retreating townsmen had snatched away the ladder which served the purpose of a staircase.

Dropmore was the first out.

Snatching up the gong stick, he beat it loudly against the gong.

The lamps were blazing still in front of the show.

A mixed crowd of town and gown gathered in front of the booth.

"Stone them! Stone them!" shouted the town, as the university men gathered on the platform.

Dropmore constituted himself the leader of the riot.

"It's all right, now Dropmore's come," said Sir Sydney Dawson. "He's sure to get up a very neat imitation of Donnybrook Fair. If we had not come for a row, he would have started one for our especial benefit."

"How are we to get down?" asked Jack.

"Drop from the platform."

The university men presented a formidable phalanx.

There were more of them amongst the crowd, and though they were outnumbered by the town, they were by no means contemptible antagonists.

The town now began to throw stones and mud.

Several Oxonians were hit.

"Now, my lads," exclaimed Dropmore, "get down to *terra firma*, and let the cads have it—hot and strong, mind. Keep together, and fight your way to your colleges."

As he spoke, he precipitated himself into the mob. It was a second Curtius leaping into the gulf. He was surrounded in a moment, the town crying—
“That’s the one! Give it him. Slog, slog.”

The others were not slow in following his example.

Jack did not think of any body.

He was separated from his companions, and no sooner reached the ground than he was engaged with half-a-dozen antagonists.

He could hear Dropmore’s voice shouting—

“Gown! Gown!”

And every now and then hoarse cries of “Town! Town!” were raised.

By dint of sheer pluck and hard knuckles, he fought his way out of the crowd, and got into the field away from the glare and the din of the fair.

Here a few Oxonians had assembled, pursued by the mob.

It was with pleasure he heard Sir Sydney Dawson’s voice.

“Shoulder to shoulder,” he said, “like the guards at Waterloo. No straggling. The mob’s savage, and it won’t do to give half a chance.”

The gownsmen retreated slowly, while the townsmen charged them most furiously at intervals.

“There’s a bargee,” said Jack. “I must punish him.”

Stepping back, he aimed a blow at a stout, burly man, hitting him in the eye.

“How about that puppy-dog pie, under Marlow bridge?” he said.

“I’ll give you pie, you puppy,” replied the bargeman.

As he spoke he collared Jack, and dragged him into the mob.

Now an Oxford mob is not a kind or considerate one.

It is a cruel, savage, vindictive crowd.

And woe to the man who gets down.

They show him no mercy.

Jack struggled hard, but with half-a-dozen strong hands at his throat, he could not do very much.

Just as his strength was failing him, a diversion was made in the rear.

Dropmore came up shouting, “Gown to the rescue!” and charged the crowd.

The town fell back, and Jack found himself seeing stars, and wiping the blood from his nose.

"Don't you do that again, young shaver," said Dropmore. "It was lucky I came up. Now then. Keep together and make for the High."

They ran up a small street, and reached the corn-market.

The mob followed them and a regular riot commenced.

The Oxford men made a stand in the corn market, which, from its broadness, gave them excellent facilities for fighting.

From every part the town poured in.

The cries of "Town! Town!" resembled the old shouts of "Prentices! Prentices! Clubs! Clubs!" in the city of London centuries ago.

A lot of Worcester men, hearing the noise came out and made a welcome addition to the gowns.

The fighting grew fast and furious, and the collegians drove the town up St. Giles's.

"That's your sort, go it!" cried Jack, hitting a townsman in the eye.

Suddenly he heard a cry of—

"The proctor is coming. Run! Run!"

The crowd raised a derisive shout.

"They'll cut now," exclaimed a tradesman's son, who had taken a prominent part in the affray.

Jack remembered being had up before the dean, for breaking Mr. Scaper's windows, so he ran up a small street, and stood still panting, near the Bodleian.

Close to him, when the alarm was sounded, were Harvey and Sir Sydney Dawson.

They were not so fortunate.

The proctor caught them, and exclaimed—

"Your name and college, gentlemen?"

They told him.

The velvet sleeve of the proctor was close to Harvey.

The bulldogs, as the proctor's marshals are called, were taking stock of them.

"Go to your college at once," said the proctor.

They turned round, being caught in the act, and in the High Street met Jack.

"Hullo! Harkaway," exclaimed Sir Sydney. "Did the proctor nail you?"

"No fear," replied Jack. "I bolted."

"You're a sharp sort of customer for a freshman in his first year," said Sir Sydney, smiling.

"Why not?"

"Here am I, an old stager, and I go and get collared like a bird who has a pinch of salt put upon his tail!"

"Are you in for it, too, Dick?" exclaimed Jack.

"Yes, worse luck," replied Harvey, "and I've a couple of loose teeth into the bargain."

"Where's Tom Carden?"

"Sloped off home, I expect. He's a leary old fox," remarked Sir Sydney.

"What are we going to do now?" inquired Jack.

"Go back to college, I suppose, since the proctor has gated us," answered Harvey.

"I vote we do nothing of the sort," exclaimed Sir Sydney. "The theatre is open to-night; let's go in for half an hour. They play Don Giovanni. It's an opera company or something like it."

"No, it isn't," said Jack. "It's a burlesque. I saw the bills stuck up."

"Well, shall we have a box?"

"I'd rather have another shy at the cads," replied Jack.

"That be hanged! I've had enough of it," cried Sir Sydney. "I've punched twenty heads to-night, if I've punched one, and that sort of thing becomes monotonous by repetition. Besides cads' heads are hard and hurt my fingers."

"Well," said Jack, "let's turn into the theatre for half an hour."

"I could do with a beer first," remarked Harvey.

"What do you say, Dawson?"

"I think I could struggle with a little," replied the baronet.

Seeing a tavern near the theatre, they went in and called for three glasses of ale.

A tall thin, lantern-jawed man was standing and solacing himself with cold gin and pinches of snuff, which he took out of a box on the counter.

"Going to the theatre, gents?" he asked.

"What's that to do with you?" exclaimed Jack, who was not in a good humour with the town.

"A great deal, sir; I belong to the company. My name's Peter, and I play ghostesses!" said the man.

"Oh, you do," said Jack. "What is your part to-night?"

"I come on in the statue scene," replied Peter. "It's Don Giovanni. The Don sees me sitting on the stone horse and chaffs me. I've got to answer him, and say that he will sup with me in the infernal regions. Oh! I'm powerful good at ghostesses!"

"We're going in for half an hour, and we shall see you," exclaimed Sir Sydney. "Mind you do it well."

"No fear, sir!"

Jack had slipped round to another part of the bar.

"Can you give me some cayenne pepper?" Jack asked of the barmaid.

"What for, sir?"

"Never mind. It's a lark. I'll give you a kiss to-morrow and take you out on Sunday, if you will."

The girl smiled and presently went to the kitchen, returning with about half-an-ounce of red pepper in a piece of paper.

"Thanks, very much. I shan't forget you, Polly," he said.

Going back to his friends, Jack took up the snuff-box, and holding it down, emptied the pepper into the snuff.

Harvey saw him, and said—

"What devilment are you up to now?"

"You'll see a lark presently," exclaimed Jack.

"What are you going to do?" said Harvey.

"If the ghost doesn't sneeze his heart out, I'll eat my head, and my head's not butcher's meat," replied Jack.

Harvey grinned.

"No one but you would have thought of such a thing," he said.

"Of course not. Larking is my line of country. I understand it."

Just then a small boy rushed frantically into the tavern.

"Peter!" he exclaimed. "Where's that Peter?"

"Here, young un. What's flurried your milk?" cried the ghost.

"You're called; the curtain's waiting, and you'll get fined if you're not smart."

"Coming," cried Peter, drinking his gin and water.

"Have another sninch of puff, as my friend Carden would say," cried Jack.

He offered him the box.

"Never say no to a good thing," and Peter took two pinches, one for each nostril, and ramming them well home ran off to the theatre.

"Come on!" exclaimed Jack. "We've no time to lose."

Going to the pay-place, they took the stage-box and were ushered to it by a man with programmes.

Just as they were comfortably seated, the bell tinkled and the curtain drew up.

CHAPTER VIII.

A RUN FOR SAFETY.

THE little house was well filled with respectable people.

As if to show his contempt for Oxford society, Sir Sydney Dawson took out his handsome cigar case, and lighted up, though he knew it was against the rules.

Jack hinted as much to him.

"What's the use of rules, if they are not to be broken? If they can stop my smoking, they are welcome to try," replied Sir Sydney.

In the centre of the stage was a horse, and on the horse's back was Peter.

It was intended to represent a statue, and Peter was supposed to be made of stone.

The don and his valet, Leperello, came on the stage, and the don addressed the statue.

Jack watched Peter carefully.

He saw his face twitch convulsively, first on one side and then on the other.

He saw his head shake, and the tears run down his cheek, while his mouth opened and shut.

"It's impossible that he can bear it much longer," thought Jack.

Nor was he wrong.

Peter was only human after all, though he boasted how well he could do the "ghostesses."

Suddenly he threw back his head, and gave vent to a tremendous sneeze that shook the theatre.

The red pepper was too much for him.

Don Giovanni left off speaking, and stared at the statue.

"A-chiffoo ! a-chiffoo ! a-chiff-foo ! " sneezed the miserable Peter.

The audience began to laugh, and the laugh deepened into a roar.

Jack clapped his hands and applauded vigorously.

"Bravo, Peter ! " he said from the stage box.

Peter, forgetting all about his part and character, shook his fist at him.

"I'll Peter you," he said, in a low voice. "You've been putting—a-chiff-foo !—something in the—a-chiff-foo, foo-foo !—snuff, blarm your young—a-chiff-foo !—eyes ! "

"Go it, Peter ; you can do it," replied Jack, derisively.

The sneezing now became continuous.

Peter shook the horse so that the framework gave way.

He came to the floor with a crash, above which his awful a-chiff-foo ! was distinctly audible.

The lessee rushed on the stage, and began to cuff Peter unmercifully.

This made the audience roar louder than ever, and the curtain was lowered amidst a scene of unutterable confusion.

"We'd best make tracks," said Sir Sydney.

"All right ; I'm ready," replied Jack, who had laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks.

They quitted the box, and reached the street, making their way back again to the corn-market.

Here loud cries informed them that the fighting was still going on between town and gown.

So formidable had the contest become, that it assumed the proportions of a riot.

Police in large numbers were hastening to the spot.

The town had driven the gown up St. Giles's as far as Keble College.

A number of freshmen from Keble turned out, and fighting well together, drove the town down towards the High Street again.

A knot of townsmen encountered the three friends, and Jack immediately "let out " at one, who rolled over.

They were instantly sat upon by the others, who outnumbered them in the order of three to one.

Jack fought like a Turk.

Suddenly a cry of "The police are on us!" alarmed the combatants.

"Step it!" said Sir Sydney. "It will never do to be collared by the police; they're worse than the proctor and his bulldogs."

Giving one antagonist a parting "reminder," as he called it, Jack set off running.

The police caught sight of the gowns and closely pursued them.

Seeing a door open in a private house Sir Sydney exclaimed, in a hurried tone—

"In here! Quick!"

They darted into the passage, shut the door, and leaned pantingly against the wall, while the police followed by a yelling mob, ran blindly on in pursuit of fugitive gowns.

Presently a young girl, bearing a candle in her hand, appeared.

She was tall, slender, and fair; her features were exquisitely lovely, and her age could not have been more than eighteen.

"Do you wish to see my father, gentlemen?" she asked. "If so, you would have done well to have knocked at the door."

"We found it open, miss," replied Sir Sydney, "and beg to apologise for our intrusion."

"It is the servant's carelessness. She has gone for some beer for supper."

"Pray pardon us," began Jack.

"I have nothing to pardon," she replied. "If you will step into the sitting-room, I will call my father, with whom, I suppose, you have business. He has, I know, a large connection with university gentlemen."

"Who is your father, may I ask?" replied Sir Sydney.

"His name is Moses Manasses."

Sir Sydney had some difficulty in suppressing a loud whistle.

He, in conjunction with most Oxford men of any standing, had heard of Mossy Manasses, the rich Jew money-lender.

He had also heard of his pretty daughter Hilda.

"Permit me to explain," he said, "how we came here. It was entirely an accident."

"Then you have no business with my father?"

"Not at present, though it is by no means improbable that some of us may require his services some day. The fact is, we were pursued by the police."

"For what?" asked Hilda, fixing her lustrous blue eyes upon Jack.

"We got into a town and gown row," said Jack

"Ah! I heard from my father that one of the disgraceful riots, provoked by the Oxford gentlemen was going on."

She laid a sarcastic stress on the word gentlemen.

"You are a little too hard on us, Miss Hilda," said Sir Sydney.

"You know my name," she exclaimed, in some surprise.

"It would be strange if I had not heard of the prettiest girl in Oxford," answered Sir Sydney, gallantly.

"I do not wish for any absurd compliments, sir," she said, severely. "And as you have no business here, and as, I presume, you are now out of danger, will it not be as well for you to return to your college?"

"Certainly. We are very sorry to have disturbed you, and thank you sincerely for your timely shelter."

"Nay," she said, "I have given you none; I am turning you out now."

"Well, I will say for the shelter your house afforded us," exclaimed Sir Sydney, biting his lips.

"I will take care the door is not so carelessly left open again," she answered.

She opened the street door as she spoke, and they passed out.

Jack kissed his hand to her, and said—

"Hard-hearted Hilda!"

She made him no answer but slammed the door almost rudely.

The young men hurried quickly back to St. Aldate's.

Owing to the action of the police, the riot was quickly put down, and while the proctor drove the gown to their colleges, the constable caused the town to disperse.

The streets were now still.

"What a pretty girl!" said Jack, as they neared home.

"Isn't she?" replied Sir Sidney. "It makes one

almost anxious to do bills at forty per cent. with old Mossy, on the chance of seeing his lovely daughter."

"Let's fly kites for twenties or some small sum," exclaimed Harvey.

"You've no chance in that direction," said Sir Sydney. "She's going to be my girl if she's anybody's. I've marked her for my own."

"Bosh!" said Jack. "She looked at me more kindly than at any of you."

"I'll tell Emily," remarked Harvey, with a smile.

Jack was about to reply when they found themselves at the gates of St. Aldate's.

It was just upon the stroke of twelve, so they were only in time.

"Twelve of the clock, by Jove! Wake up, old dormouse," exclaimed the baronet.

The sleepy porter let them in, and recognising them said—

"The senior proctor has sent to know if you, Sir Sydney, and Mr. Harvey, were in college."

"Very kind of him, to be sure," replied Dawson.

"I said you hadn't come in yet, and so you've got to go to him at half-past nine to-morrow, sir."

"Just tell the senior proctor, with my compliments, that I'll see him at the mouth of the Cherwell first. I've a particular engagement with a dish of gudgeon at ten, and can't possibly be disturbed."

The porter grinned.

"Where is Mr. Carden?" asked Jack.

"Come in long ago, sir. He ain't like you freshmen, sir, begging your pardon. He knows when to stop, he does."

The three men entered the quad, wishing the porter good-night, and Sir Sydney gave the old man half-a-sovereign not to remind the proctor's marshal of his late return.

"What's the little game now?" asked Jack.

"The diminutive amusement, to my mind, will be to draw the badger," replied Sir Sydney.

"Who do you mean?"

"Tom Carden. I'll bet we find the old fox reading hard, with a wet towel round his head and a cup of green tea by his side. He's a beggar to work at anything he takes in hand; I will say that for him."

"I like a fellow who is thorough," said Jack.

"So don't I. He's a nuisance. Wait till you are in training. He'll put you through your paces, hard all, I can tell you. It's no joke to row in the St. Aldate's 'eight,' when Captain Carden has made up his mind that we are to get to the head of the river next year."

They went up number three staircase on their way to Carden's rooms, which were on the second floor.

CHAPTER IX.

KEMP ASKS A FAVOUR.

SIR SYDNEY DAWSON was right in his surmise that Carden would be at work.

He was one of those peculiar men who are rarely seen working, but who, nevertheless, get through a large amount of reading at odd intervals.

Carden was not a rich man, nor had he great expectations from any relatives.

Therefore it followed that he must take his degree and make the most of his time, if he wanted to get on in the world.

His only passion was boating, and everyone admitted him to be a capital oar.

He was picked for the university eight in the famous annual match between Oxford and Cambridge, and he had determined to get the St. Aldate's boat to the head of the river, if such a thing was to be accomplished by human means.

He opened his door to a noisy summons, and, looking patronisingly at his visitors, said—

"I'll bet something you are not all sober, or you would not come knocking a decent fellow like me up at this time of night."

"You humbugging old sap!" replied Sir Sydney, "what do you mean by your insolence? Give me to drink, or I shall have to make an example of you."

"You get nothing out of me to-night," said Carden.

"Don't be mean."

"Not the smell of an oil-rag. Not a thimbleful."

"I say, Carden, be generous. We have been fighting the battle of the university against the cads," said Jack.

"I dare say you have, and more shame for you, when you ought to have been within gates."

"Why, you horrid old sinner," said Sir Sydney, "you were in it too."

"I only protected you poor boys."

"Bring out some drink."

"I tell you I won't. Go and find it somewhere else, and leave me alone. Get out, or I shall bring my shoemaker in contact with your tailor, which, in their connection, you will find painful," said Carden, with a laugh.

"Don't read to-night. Have a game at Van John," urged Jack.

"Hake your took, dear boys," replied Carden.

"Well, if you're such a bear, we will take our hook, as you politely request," said Sir Sydney.

Tom Carden held the door open for them.

"Good-night, beast," exclaimed Sir Sydney.

"Good-night, vulture," replied Carden.

"You irritating old ruffian! what do you mean?" asked Sir Sydney.

"You're a bird of prey. Be off."

"You said I wasn't sober," answered Sir Sydney, who really had been drinking too much, and with the drink and the excitement, was a little husky.

"Say 'Oxford is a truly rural place,' and I'll retract," said Tom Carden.

"All right. Oxford is a tooral looral place," replied Sir Sydney.

"That won't do; try again."

"Oxford is a looral tooral—I mean, rooral looral sort of crib. Hang the words! I can't say them."

"Of course you can't. Go home to bed. You have been put to the test, weighed in the balance, and found wanting. Go home, dear boy, and may you find your S. and B. in the morning; all your thirsty soul can drink."

"I have a soul above soda and brandy," replied Sir Sydney, loftily; "and when I do go in for reading, I'll lay I come out before you."

With this, he began to pick his way carefully down the staircase.

Jack and Harvey followed him.

"What are you men going to do?" he asked, as they reached the quad.

Harvey felt very miserable at the prospect of having to appear before the proctor on the following morning, and he wanted to go to bed.

"I shall turn in," he said.

"I think I shall have a cigar, and then get between the sheets," said Jack.

"Come to my rooms, then, and I'll brew you a bowl of bishop. Know what bishop is?" said the baronet.

"No," answered Jack.

"Oxford's celebrated for its bishop—I don't mean a joke about Wilberforce. Bishop is made of port wine, hot water, nutmeg, lemon, etc., and a rattling good drink it is after a town and gown row."

"I'll come with pleasure, for I'm not in the humour to go to bed just yet," said Jack.

"I'll slope off," replied Harvey. "Excuse me, will you?"

"By all means, if you want to roost."

"I don't feel jolly. Will you go to the proctor with me to-morrow morning?"

"Not if I know it," replied Sir Sydney. "The proctor will forget all about me. I'm an old hand, and I mean to chance it. You can go if you like."

"Well, good-night," said Harvey.

They wished him good-night, and he wended his solitary way to his rooms, while Sir Sydney and Jack sought the hospitable shelter of the former.

Jack did not stay long, but promised to come to breakfast in the morning.

"You must come," said Sir Sydney. "I want your opinion of a new coach, who is spoken very highly of."

"Are you going in for reading?" asked Jack.

"Yes. I can't help myself, if I want to pass my little go."

"Who is this new tutor?"

"A man of the name of Mole. He has been a school-master or something."

"Why, that's my Mole," replied Jack. "How funny you should select him! He's an old friend, and was with me in Limbi. He will think it odd I haven't been to see him, but really I have not had time since I have been up here."

Jack had not forgotten Mr. Mole, and he was delighted at the opportunity of meeting him again.

Punctually at ten, he turned up at Sir Sydney's rooms. An excellent breakfast was on the table.

Harvey arrived soon afterwards, looking radiant.

"I've seen the proctor," he exclaimed; "and he has let me off with two hundred lines of Virgil, telling me to be a good boy and not do it again."

"That's jolly," said Jack. "I hope you will follow his advice. Who do you think is coming here this morning?"

"Can't say."

"Old Mole. Dawson's going to read with him."

"Never!"

"He is, though," replied Jack.

Sir Sydney now made his appearance in dressing-gown and slippers.

The breakfast proceeded, and when it was over, cigars were produced.

"Don't touch those," said Sir Sydney, pointing to some in a piece of paper.

"Why not?"

"They are explosive—in fact, they are a sell. A little way from the top is a squib, which blows up."

"Thank you for the hint," said Jack. "That's good enough for Mole."

"I keep them for my tradesmen. The fellows come here worrying for orders, and I give them a cigar, which soon starts them," replied the baronet, laughing.

About eleven o'clock Mr. Mole came in.

He shook hands cordially with the boys, and said, reproachfully—

"Mahomet has had to come to the mountain. I think you might have found me out, Harkaway."

"Don't cut up rough, sir. I thought I would let you alone for a week or two, just to give you time to recover yourself. You will have enough of me now," answered Jack.

Mr. Mole smiled faintly.

"You are a man now," he replied; "and of course you will not think of playing boyish tricks."

"Certainly not, sir. Have a weed."

"Perhaps Mr. Weazle hasn't breakfasted," said Sir Sydney.

"Mole, sir, Mole—Isaac Mole, at your service!" said that gentleman, correcting him.

"Oh, ah! Beg pardon, I'm sure. I knew it was a vermin of some sort," cried Sir Sydney.

Mr. Mole looked at him half angrily, but turning to Harkaway, said—

"I will not refuse your offer, my dear boy, as I have had my breakfast."

Jack handed him one of the explosive cigars, and politely gave him a light.

He puffed away in serene contentment.

"Well," said Sir Sydney, "when are we to begin to read, Mr. Stoat?"

"Mole, sir? How often am I to remind you that my name is Mole, M o l e?"

"I've got such a beastly memory for names. Don't mind me."

"I will try not to, though you are irritating. We will begin to read, say to-morrow. Come to my place, Harkaway, and you, Harvey, I already reckon upon as my pupils."

"It must be in the afternoon sir, because of lectures," said Jack.

"Very well; make it between two and four."

"That will do for me, Mr. Pole," said Sir Sydney.

"Mole, sir; not Pole," cried Mr. Mole, in high dudgeon.

"It's all the same. I'll write it down when you've gone, and study it, so you musn't get your back up, my dear Mr. Foal."

"Confound it, sir, a foal is the young of the horse!" almost shrieked Mole.

"Ah! so it is! Your name is Cole, I've got it now. I'll think of the fire, and then I shall remember."

"It's an M, not a C," he groaned.

"Never mind; I've got the sound of it, now, and I shall soon have it all right, Mr. Toll. You said Toll, didn't you? I'll think of turnpikes and paying toll. It's all right."

Mr. Mole uttered a subdued sigh.

"Anything the matter?" asked Sir Sydney. "I hope you're not worse. Try some beer."

"It is too early, thank you all the same. What books are you reading?"

"Oh! some Greek and Roman buffers. What are their names? Tacitus, Herodotus—good name, that. Not so easy to remember, though, as yours, Mr. Hole."

Another groan broke from Mr. Mole.

"Wrong again, am I? Yours is a deuced hard name to recollect. Of course it's Dole. I've got it now. What an ass I must be."

Mr. Mole was about to make an impatient exclamation, when there was an explosion.

Fiz! bang! went the cigar he was smoking.

Mr. Mole, throwing himself backwards, lay on the floor, shouting wildly for help, his face scorched and blackened.

"Why, what is the matter with the weed?" asked Sir Sydney.

Harvey assisted Mr. Mole to rise, and gave him a glass of water.

"Sir Sydney Dawson," he cried, "you have committed a breach of hospitality. The trick, from the effects of which I am a sufferer, was a shameful one."

"'Pon my word, sir, it wasn't my fault!" said Sir Sydney.

Mr. Mole was seized with a serious attack of hiccoughs, and staggered about alarmingly.

"Hold, up, sir," said Jack. "You're all over the shop."

"The gentleman's got the staggers," said Sir Sydney.

"Give him some brandy."

A glass of spirits revived him.

When he recovered himself, he shook his fist at Harkaway, saying—

"You are all in it. I consider it an outrage, and you shall none of you be my pupils!"

"You have got a nerve," said Jack.

"Nerve or no nerve, I did think I should have a little peace up here. You call yourselves young men, and behave like children. I will not stop with you!"

He walked towards the door.

Jack put out his foot, and he very cleanly tumbled over it.

There were some goldfish in a bowl on a stand, and as he fell his head went right into the water.

The fish and the water went over his face and neck, and with his hair full of sand, and a small fish sticking in

his right ear, he ran out on the landing, and was soon afterwards seen scudding across the quad as if he had a pack of hounds at his heels.

When Sir Sydney had finished laughing at the undignified exit of Mr. Mole, he said : "By Jove! this is not right. I must write a letter of apology."

"Oh, Mole's used to it," answered Jack. "We have had him in training for some time."

"He did not seem to like it."

"That's his way."

It being time to attend lectures, they separated, and Sir Sydney, to his disgust met the proctor, who had not forgotten him.

He received a severe lecture, and a long imposition, which was the eclogues of Virgil to write out and translate, and was told to be careful, or he would be sent away for six months.

He did not think of doing the punishment himself.

When he reached his room, he said to his scout, who was our friend, Mr. Buster, the attendant upon Jack—

"Look here, Buster, go and get me some fellow to write out and translate Virgil's eclogues. Get it done soon and pay him what he likes."

"I know a gentleman, sir, in this college who will do it," replied Buster.

"What, a St. Aldate's man?"

"Yes, sir. He's one of the poor gents who come up as servitors. Marks the names in the chapel, and serves as Bible clerk, and all that. Gets about a hundred a year to live upon. Not a gentleman commoner like you, sir."

"You wouldn't like him for a master, eh, Buster? Not much to be made out of him."

The scout grinned.

"I can't abide a poor person, sir. I don't like myself sometimes, cos I'm poor," he replied.

"Poor! you're not poor. Now, I'll bet, if I wanted a fifty, you could lend it me," said Sir Sydney, lighting a fresh cigar.

"Well, sir, if you'd give me sixty for fifty for a month, I'd strain a point."

"You would, eh?"

"Oh, yes, sir; cert'n'y, sir."

"Get out of my sight, you money-making villain!"

exclaimed Sir Sydney. "And, look here, sport my oak. I want to be quiet for an hour."

"Yes, sir."

"And look here, Buster. Go to the stable, and order my dogcart to be ready at three, tell them to put the bays to and hitch up the curbs tight, those bays are regular devils to shy."

"Cert'n'y, sir."

The scout lingered to see if his master had any other command, and had just neared the door when Sir Sydney exclaimed—

"What is the name of the fellow who is going to do my imposition?"

"Name of Franklin, sir."

"How will you get at him?"

"Through his scout, sir. His scout and me, sir, is pals," replied Buster.

"What do you mean to charge me?"

"A fiver won't hurt you, sir."

"How much will Franklin get out of that?"

"Well, sir, we shall sweat it a bit. There will be a pound to his scout, and a pound to me, and——"

"Get out of my sight, or I'll twist your neck. Hang your impudence, get out!" shouted Sir Sydney, half-angry half-amused.

Buster retreated.

"I'll go and see this Franklin myself," muttered Sir Sydney. "I wonder what a poor man at Oxford is like. Is he a gentleman? The colleges were once full of poor men. I should like to see him. At present, I've only met with fellows like myself. Perhaps an hour or two with a poor man would do me good, always supposing he's a gentleman. I can't stand a cad."

He rose and looked out of the window.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, "there is Harkaway talking to Kemp in the quad. Wonders will never cease. I thought everybody had cut the chousing scoundrel. It's odd Harkaway should talk to the fellow he showed up."

He paused and watched them for a few minutes.

"I'll lay my life," he went on, "that Kemp is asking him a favour. I can see it in his manner. There is something on. I must get this out of Jack when I see him."

CHAPTER X.

WHAT KEMP WANTED.

JACK was going across the outer quad of St. Aldate's when Kemp met him.

He felt rather surprised that he should stop him, after the way in which he had exposed his cheating at cards.

But being of a good-natured disposition, he exclaimed—

“What can I do for you?”

“I scarcely expected, my dear fellow, that you would speak to me,” replied Kemp.

“I shouldn't have spoken to you first; so you needn't make any mistake about that,” answered Jack.

“Well, I am much obliged to you for your condescension,” said Kemp, with a slight tinge of sarcasm in his tone.

“Don't apologise. Cut it short.”

“Come to my rooms; we can talk better there.”

“No,” replied Jack, decisively.

“Let me come to your rooms then.”

“No,” said Jack, again. “I can't do that either.”

“Very well, I suppose you must have your own way. A wilful man won't be led. I haven't much to say, but what I have is important to me.”

“Spit it out, then, and look sharp.”

“You needn't be in such a hurry.”

“Business, my dear fellow. I am going down to the river side, and if you will walk with me through the Christ Church meadows to the St. Aldate's Barge, you're welcome.”

“All right; let me take your arm.”

“Really, you must excuse me,” replied Jack. “I don't want to hurt any fellow's feelings, but when a fellow does a seedy thing, you know, it isn't the cheese to be seen hand in glove with him.”

A deep flush came over Kemp's face.

It was not a nice face at any time, and when angry passions tormented his soul and found expression in his eyes it became more disagreeable than usual.

“That's just what I wanted to talk about. You see,”

he said, "that I have got my hand out of the sling, so you did not hurt me so very much after all, when you drove that infernal fork through my fist."

"Glad of it. Didn't want to mark you for life," answered Jack.

"But you have though. Look at that."

Kemp held up his hand, and showed a scar which time would never efface.

"It was all your own fault," said Jack.

"No, it wasn't, old man, and that's what I want to explain. Frank Davis is ready to swear that he saw that confounded monkey of yours put the card on the table."

"How did your hand get on it, then?"

"I can't tell. By accident, I suppose. I'll swear——"

"Swear not at all," replied Jack, smiling. "It's a bad habit."

"Well, I don't want you to believe me, but will you mind coming to Davis's rooms to-night and hearing what he has to say about it?"

"I do not like Davis," said Jack. "We met at Singapore, and he did not behave well."

"Strain a point for once. Think how I have been cut and looked down upon, owing to that beastly card affair," pleaded Kemp.

"I don't see what I can do to help you," said Jack.

"You might put me right with the fellows in our set."

"I have no very strong inclination to try."

"I always thought you a good-hearted fellow, and I declare I was not to blame in the matter. It was all that monkey. Will you come?"

"I don't mind looking in for half an hour; but you need not go howling all over college about it," replied Jack.

"I swear I won't say a word to a soul, if you'll only come," said Kemp, earnestly.

"Very well; tell Davis he may expect me about eight. Ta, ta!"

"Good-bye," replied Kemp.

Jack went on towards the river and Kemp made his way to Davis's rooms.

The latter was expecting him.

He was sitting in an arm-chair, smoking a pipe, and sipping brandy and soda.

"Well!" he exclaimed, "will he come?"

"Yes," answered Kemp. "I have worked it all right, and did not have so much difficulty as I expected. You must make him believe it was the fault of the monkey. I can't stand being cut by Dawson and all my old friends."

"I should think not," said Davis with a laugh. "How much a year was Dawson worth to you at cards and billiards?"

"What does that matter to you?" replied Kemp, savagely. "You hate this man Harkaway, don't you?"

"Just a few!"

"And you want me to help you to ruin him?"

"Yes, and I have promised to pay you for it."

"I don't want payment for I now hate him as much as you," said Kemp. "But there are several reasons why I wish to put myself right with Dawson."

"I dare say there are. No man likes to be called a card-sharper," replied Davis with his irritating laugh.

"Look here," exclaimed Kemp, angrily, "you will chaff me once too often."

"What then?"

"Don't make me wild. I don't want to quarrel with you. Dawson is going to ride a horse next week, against the Duke of Woodstoke."

"He's a Magdalen man, isn't he?"

"We call it Maudlin, not Magdalen."

"I stand corrected," said Davis. "Forge ahead."

"There isn't a better rider in Oxford than Sir Sydney Dawson, if he only keeps himself sober and his nerves right," continued Kemp.

"Which is exactly what you don't want him to do, I suppose?"

"No. I've bet against him, because I knew if I had him in hand, he'd have D. T. before the race."

"Released from your control, I suppose he treads the path of virtue?"

"Harkaway, you see, is a very different man from me," said Kemp, "and he is Dawson's great chum now."

"Which makes all the difference."

"Precisely. Dawson's horse, Go-ahead, is as fine a flyer as I ever saw, and the Duke's horse, Wild Irishman, won't be in the hunt with him if Dawson keeps himself straight."

"Hope he won't for your sake, if you've made a book against him."

"It's all very well for you to laugh at me," said Kemp. "You're a rich man ; I'm a poor man, and I have to live like a gentleman on how much a year, do you think ?"

"Hate guessing ; shan't try," replied Davis, refilling his pipe.

"A beggarly hundred and fifty pounds, while I dare say you have five hundred, and expect your debts to be paid into the bargain."

"Well, I can't grumble at the pecuniary arrangements. I am not tied down."

"You don't like me really," continued Kemp, "you only chum in with me because you hate Harkaway, and think I shall be useful to you."

"I'll be candid for once in my life and admit that you are right," answered Davis.

"There is another thing," said Kemp, "you want to get into Sir Sydney Dawson's set, and Harkaway has said too much about you."

"What about me?" asked Davis, fiercely.

"Oh, nothing much. Some chaff about your performances in Singapore ; that's all. I merely mentioned this to show that we are useful to one another."

"I've told you I'll back you in any villany you like to get up," said Davis, "if the end is to be Harkaway's ruin. Isn't that enough for you?"

"More than enough. I thought you were getting faint-hearted," said Kemp.

"Not I. If he comes to-night, don't forget the loaded dice."

"I have them in my pocket," replied Kemp.

"And the drug?"

"Yes !"

"There will be only you and I and Harkaway, and we will induce him to play high at hazard or cards. If he can't pay, which I don't suppose he can, as men don't generally carry hundreds of pounds about with them in their pockets, we will take his bills and get old Manasses to give us the money for them."

"That will do ; in three months he will have to pay the money," said Kemp.

"If he can. More likely, he will have to leave the university," said Davis, with a sinister smile.

"That's what we want. Anything that will tend to lower and disgrace Harkaway, will do us good."

"Of course, but take my advice and don't bustle the man. He won't stand any nonsense," said Davis.

"I know that, and don't mean to rush him; leave him to me. If he comes into these rooms to-night, it will lay the foundation of his ruin," remarked Kemp emphatically.

"I hope so, with all my heart," replied Davis. "I could die happy if I saw him go to smash."

He spoke with such deep hatred that there was little doubt he meant what he said.

CHAPTER XI.

JACK'S BRAVERY ON THE RIVER.

WHILE Davis and Kemp were calmly plotting how to ruin Jack, the latter was going down to the water-side.

The bank of the Isis at the bottom of the Christ-Church meadows, is in term time one of the prettiest sights in Oxford.

Each college has its handsomely-built barge moored a little way from the shore.

In each barge is a reading and writing-room, and facilities for changing or putting on boating costumes, while on the roof is an agreeable lounge, where a man can smoke or talk or watch the various crafts on the water.

The St. Aldate's barge was one of the handsomest on the river, and Jack was punted over to it with some other men of the college.

In a short time the college eight was going up to Sandford for a spin, and Jack was to row seven in her.

Tom Carden had a critical eye, and he had picked Harkaway out as a likely oar directly he saw him afloat.

He had great bodily strength, and what was of more importance, he was thoroughly at home in a boat and possessed skill.

This he had acquired through his being at sea for so long a time.

"Tell you what, old fellow," said Carden, "if you continue to improve on your present form and sink a few

pounds of flesh, I'll get you into the 'varsity eight next year."

"Will you really?" said Jack, whose face flushed with pleasure.

"I will, by Jove!"

To have the high honour of rowing in the university eight in his first year, was enough to please a less ambitious boy than Jack.

He fancied he could see the excited thousands on the banks, as the boats shot along between Putney and Mortlake.

Already shouts rang in his ears, of "Oxford wins. No, she don't; Cambridge leads. No, Oxford, has it. Oxford, Oxford for ever!"

He had begun to love dear old Oxford, and took a pride in everything which related to the university.

Especially he was proud of his own college, St. Aldate's.

It happened that several of the St. Aldate's crew did not turn up.

Tom Carden was very much annoyed.

"We can't go down," he said to Jack, "unless we get some watermen to fill up."

"Oh, hang the watermen," replied Jack; "put off the spin till to-morrow and look our fellows up well; they deserve a good jacketing."

"So they do. We shall never get to the head of the river like this. Men must train and work if they want to do anything," said Carden.

"Of course they must. Work first and play afterwards; it can't be all play."

Tom Carden buttoned his boating-coat round him, and sat sulkily looking at the water.

"I shall go for a paddle, I think, in a canoe," exclaimed Jack.

"Don't for goodness' sake waste your time in one of those abominations," said Carden. "I hate a canoe for real work. It spoils your form and knocks you out of shape. Get into a tub and sweat up to Iffley and back; with this wind in your teeth it will do you good."

"You're not an easy master," cried Jack, laughing.

"It's no good being too easy, if you've got to get a spanking good crew together, I can tell you; and you fellows want as much looking after as a lot of babies."

"Thank you for the compliment. Well, I'll do a little treadmill in a skiff for an hour or two before hall. Good-bye! See you when I come back?"

"Don't know that you will. I shall slope off and run along the bank for a mile after Oriel. I want to see what stuff they have got in the boat."

"Look sharp, then," said Jack. "Oriel is in the Gut now."

Carden got across the river, and was soon jogging along after the Oriel boat while Jack had a skiff made ready for him, and started on his voyage.

Pulling with strength and skill, he drew ahead to the admiration of all who saw him.

"That's a likely oar," remarked the captain of the Oxford University Boat Club, who was on the top of the Exeter barge.

"Deuced good form," replied the knowing little coxswain of the O. U. B. C.

"Don't any fellow know who he is?"

"Gad!" exclaimed a handsome young man with a dissipated look, who was the rich Duke of Woodstock. "His name's Harkaway."

"What college?"

"St. Aldate's. I met him at Dawson's rooms one night; decent fellow, Dawson. I'm going to ride against Dawson, you know, in the steeple-chase."

"Sir Sydney Dawson?" said the captain of the O. U. B. C.

"Yaas. A baronet fellow. Good family, aw believe. Yaas," replied the duke.

Jack was unconscious of this conversation, and was getting into his swing off the mouth of the Cherwell when he heard a scream.

It was a woman's voice.

Turning his head, he saw an ordinary rowing boat in the act of swamping.

A little cutter yacht had run into her.

The boat contained an elderly man and a young girl.

In a second they were both struggling in the water.

"Those on board the yacht which had done the mischief, were able to seize the old man by the arm and haul him on deck.

The girl, meanwhile, drifted down the stream.

For a time her clothes supported her.

The old man, who was her father, cried loudly—

“ My daughter ! oh, save my daughter ! For the love of Heaven, gentlemen, save Hilda, or let me die with her ! ”

It required all the strength of those who held him to keep him from precipitating himself into the water.

“ Hilda ! ”

Jack thought he had heard that name somewhere before.

Could it be the daughter of old Manasses, the Jew money-lender.

Was it the girl who had treated him and his companions so coldly on the night of the town and gown row in the corn-market ?

He had not much time for consideration.

The girl, whoever she was, seemed to be rapidly losing her strength.

Shipping his sculls, Jack stood on the seat of his boat and took a header.

Diving and swimming through the water like an otter, he speedily made his way to the drowning girl.

His progress was watched with the utmost anxiety and interest from the nearest of the college barges.

“ Bravo ! well swam ! Another minute and he will have her,” cried the captain of the yacht.

Just as she was sinking, Jack caught her by her lovely hair.

Drawing her up, he put his arm round her waist, and swam with his disengaged one to the shore.

A punt which had put off to his assistance picked him up before he had gone far with his beautiful burden.

She lay like a log of wood on his arm.

Exhausted by struggling with the water, she had fainted.

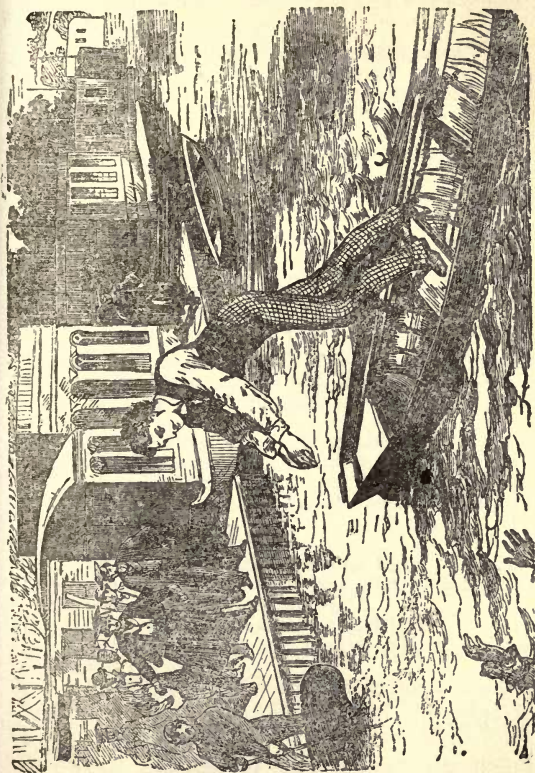
When Jack reached the land in the punt, into which he had been drawn, still bearing the girl in his embrace, the father uttered a shout of joy.

He fell on his knees and thanked Providence for the timely salvation of his daughter.

As soon as possible the yachtmen landed the old man, and he had the satisfaction of seeing his child open her eyes.

Seizing Jack by the hand, he shook it cordially, and exclaimed—

“ Young man, I thank you from my heart. May all



"JACK STOOD ON THE SEAT OF THE BOAT AND TOOK A HEADER."

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the blessings of the earth be poured upon your head by the Lord of Israel !”

“I am very glad the young lady is saved,” replied Jack modestly.

“You have saved her?”

“Any one else would have done the same.”

“No ! no !” exclaimed the old man. “Give honour to whom honour is due. You are her rescuer. Whenever you want a friend, come to me. I will never forget this day’s work. If I do, may my right hand wither, and my money fade away like the leaves of autumn !”

A large crowd had collected round the girl and her father.

Thinking he could not be of any further use, Jack backed his way out.

He was tapped on the shoulder as he extricated himself from the throng.

“You’re a nice kind of water-rat to go swimming after girls,” said a voice.

It was Sir Sydney Dawson.

“It’s nothing,” replied Jack.

“Isn’t it, by Jove? You’ve done a deuced fine thing. Every one is talking about you, and asking who you are.”

“Pity they haven’t something better to do,” answered Jack.

“You’re getting your name up in Oxford, old man ; and I repeat you have done a deuced fine thing.”

“For whom?”

“Yourself. Don’t you know who the girl is?” asked Sir Sydney.

“I am hardly certain.”

“You’ve a bad memory then for faces. I thought that every man who had ever done a bit of stiff knew old Manasses’ hooked nose a mile off.”

“Is she Hilda Manasses?” asked Jack.

“That’s who she is, and as fine a spoon as there is in Oxford.”

“I don’t think any one would get much spooning out of her. She seems as cold as a stone,” replied Jack.

“She’s been out driving with the Duke of Woodstock anyhow,” said Dawson.

“Then I’ll swear she has a motive for it. That girl is purity itself, I’ll stake my honour.”

“Hullo ! hit already?” cried Sir Sydney, laughing. “I

thought you told me you were engaged to a certain little Emily."

"What has that got to do with it?"

"A great deal."

"I'm only saying that—in fact, I believe—that is—hang it all, Dawson, you know what I mean."

Jack spoke in some confusion.

"I don't know a little bit what you mean," answered Sir Sydney. "All I know is that you can borrow any amount of money you like from old Manasses after this, and that Hilda, bless her—Don't hit me, if I blow a kiss to her."

"What rot!" returned Jack. "Hilda's nothing to me."

"No, of course not. You're a saint. A man who is engaged to one girl never looks at another," said Sir Sydney, banteringly.

"He ought not to."

"Of course not. We know all about that. You won't think anything more of the lovely Hilda. You won't repeat her name to yourself, and think how pretty she is, and what a claim you have on her gratitude. You won't see her face when you shut your eyes. You——"

"Shut up, for goodness' sake, Dawson," exclaimed Jack, crossly.

His tormentor, however, would not let him alone.

"You won't hate the Duke of Woodstock, for driving her out," he continued.

"Bother Woodstock!" said Jack.

"I told you so; you begin to hate him already. Never mind, I am going to ride in a steeple-chase against him and some other fellows, next week, and you will see me come in first, which will be a slight revenge for you."

"I hope you may win," said Jack, anxious to change the subject.

"So do I. The fact is, I have bet heavily on the event, and so have most of my friends. That fellow Kemp has, I think, laid against me. By the way, I saw you talking to him to-day; what did he want with you?—if it is not an impertinent question."

"I have promised to go to Davis's room. Kemp says Davis can explain how the card came under his hand."

"I don't believe it, and if I were you, I would not go," said Sir Sydney.

"I gave him my word I would."

"If you have been weak enough to promise to go, that's another thing."

"The fact is," said Jack, "I don't like to do any fellow an injustice, and if I was wrong, I will make it up to him."

"If you are satisfied, and make it up to him, I suppose we must have him in our set again, though I tell you frankly, I don't like it," said Sir Sydney. "Here's Carden. Well, my gay and gallant waterman, what are the prospects of the St. Aldate's?" he added.

"Very good," replied Carden, "if the men would only stick to their work and not shirk. I hear Harkaway has done a plucky thing, and saved a girl's life."

"I was lucky enough to be near the spot when the girl was in the water," said Jack.

"Come to my rooms and poke a smipe. I haven't had a whiff of 'bacca since breakfast," said Carden.

Jack assented, and they went away together.

In the evening he turned up, as he had promised, at Davis's rooms.

Kemp and Davis were rattling dice in a box, and playing hazard, but they stopped when he entered.

"This is kind of you, Harkaway," said Kemp.

"Take the easy-chair near the fire, and make yourself at home," said Davis, adding, "what will you have?"

"Coffee, thanks," said Jack.

The scout quickly made some coffee.

"Take it black?" asked Davis.

"Yes, no milk, and just a nip of brandy after."

While he was drinking the coffee, Davis began to explain that he was sure the monkey must have put the card on the table, and he was so earnest, that Jack began to believe him.

"We were all more or less tight," he continued.

"I know I was," said Kemp.

"If that is the case, I'm sorry I hurt you," said Jack. "But you must admit that the circumstances were suspicious."

"I do admit it."

"Let us say no more about it. I will try and put you right with my friends," Jack went on.

"Dawson's the only fellow I care about," answered Kemp. "You have behaved very handsomely, and I am grateful to you."

"We have nothing more to say, have we? If not, I shall toddle."

"Have just one shy with the dice before you go," said Davis, rattling the box carelessly.

"I'd rather not. I have come over sleepy all at once."

"It's getting into the water after that girl," suggested Davis.

"Did you hear of that?"

"Yes, and it was a fine thing, by Jove! Come, just one shy."

Ever since he had taken the coffee, Jack had felt sleepy and stupid.

Had he been completely master of himself, he would not have been so easily convinced as to Kemp's innocence.

What Davis had said was in reality only an assertion.

But Kemp had artfully put an insidious chemical compound in the coffee, which made him for a time quite childish, and ready to believe or do anything.

Seizing the box he rattled the dice.

"Well, I'll throw against you, Kemp, for a fiver," he said.

"Done with you, my boy," said Kemp.

They began to play.

Jack little suspected what seeds of future misery he was sowing that night.

It is possible to be too good-natured.

Sir Sydney Dawson had given him sound advice, when he recommended him to keep away from Davis's rooms that night.

He had fallen into a trap.

CHAPTER XII.

FALLING INTO A TRAP.

JACK went on playing though he lost considerably.

So confused was his mind that he scarcely knew what he was about.

At length Kemp said—

"That's five hundred you owe me. You've no luck to night. Shall we leave off?"

"No," said Jack; "I'll go you double or quits."

"Very well. But this is the last time, mind," said Kemp.

"All right! fire away!" cried Jack, impatiently.

"If I win you owe me a thousand. If you win we are quits."

"I'll throw first; you're so infernally long about it!" cried Jack.

He cast the dice.

A six and a four came up.

"Ten!" he cried, triumphantly. "Beat that if you can!"

Kemp rattled the ivories, and let them fall on the table.

"Sixes!" he said, quietly.

"Two sixes, by Jove!" said Davis. "Sorry for you, Harkaway. You've lost."

Jack looked blankly at his opponent.

"You'll give me an acknowledgment of the debt," said Kemp. "It's always usual."

"What do you want?" asked Jack.

"A promissory note. I'll draw one up."

He took a bill stamp from his pocket, and hastily wrote—

"£1,000 os od.

"Oxford, November 17, 18—.

"Three months after date I promise to pay Mr. Augustus Kemp, or order, the sum of one thousand pounds, for value received.

"To Augustus Kemp, Esq.

"St. Aldate's College, Oxford."

"Shove your illustrious name there," said Kemp, indicating the proper place at the bottom of the note.

With a trembling hand Jack wrote—

"John Harkaway."

"You're a witness, Davis," said Kemp. "Not that it matters much, though in money matters one can't be too particular."

He dried the ink on some blotting paper and put the note away carefully in his pocket-book.

"I feel sleepy. Think shall go sleep," said Jack, in a stupid tone.

"Do, old man. The chair's your own, and a nap will do you good," said Davis.

"Just fort' winks, that'sh all," stuttered Jack.

The next minute his head fell back, his eyes closed, and he was fast asleep.

"That's well done, isn't it?" said Kemp, smiling, so as to show the lines of his hard cruel mouth.

"Don't ask me," said Davis, who never lost an opportunity of showing his contempt for his associate.

"Why shouldn't I?"

"Because I never saw a fellow rooked before. It's out of my line of country, altogether."

"I'm playing your game as well as my own."

"Of course you are, or I wouldn't lend myself to it. I hate the devil's work!"

"There is no harm done," said Kemp.

"Yes, there is. Suppose we were shown up," replied Davis.

"We can't be. I've got him hard and fast. Who knows I drugged him, except you? Who but you knew that the dice were loaded, so that I couldn't help winning?"

"Don't talk about it. The thing's done, and if you are satisfied, I am."

"Is your oak sported? We mustn't let any one come in and find him like this," said Kemp.

"It's shut, as tight as wax. I told the scout as he went out," said Davis.

"A thousand pounds is a large sum," mused Kemp.

"Where shall you melt it?"

"Oh! Manasses will do that for me. Harkaway is a freshman. His friends are well off. He has no paper out, and no debts as yet to speak of."

"His father will take him away from Oxford when he finds all out, won't he?" asked Davis.

"I should think so. But he'll have to pay me, or I'll make his precious son a bankrupt," answered Kemp savagely.

"Is he asleep?" asked Davis, looking round nervously.

"Yes; and likely to be for the next hour or two. He's as quiet as a cast-iron dog, I'll take my oath; and no more use than a last year's bird's-nest."

"About this steeple-chase? What's your idea?" asked Davis, after a pause.

Kemp was mixing himself some soda and brandy, from which he took a long deep draught.

"It would be a deuced near thing if it was run on the square," he replied.

"Dawson can ride, I believe."

"Ride! he's the hardest rider and the hardest drinker in Oxford."

"Bar one, and that's yourself," said Davis, laughing.

"I never drink when I've got anything to do," answered Kemp. "But Dawson is a horse-dealer spoilt."

Suddenly there was a knock at the inner door.

"By George!" cried Davis, angrily, "that infernal scout of mine has forgotten to sport the oak."

"Shall I go and see who it is?" asked Kemp.

"Yes, do."

"Are you in to any one?"

"Not to a soul. Say anything you like. Cook up some lie or other."

"All right, leave it to me," said Kemp, who went to the door.

A few moments elapsed, and then he returned, accompanied by a fast-looking young man, who wore a shirt of a loud character, covered all over with horse-shoes, a horse-shoe pin, wide check trousers, very tight, and a cutaway coat.

He was smoking a large cigar.

Davis looked at him in surprise.

"Aw weally must apologise," said the stranger. "But you know I was sent over heaw after Mr. Kemp—yaas."

"Oh, if you're a friend of Kemp's sit down by all means," answered Davis.

"It's the Duke of Woodstock, you fool," whispered Kemp.

"Thank yeow," said the duke. "Don't mind if I do sit down. Yaas; my name's Woodstock. Kemp did not introduce us; but no matter. Think you said Kemp was a friend of mine? Aw, not exactly; not a friend. Want him to—aw—ride my horse—yaas."

Davis became very civil all at once when he found his visitor was the Duke of Woodstock.

"I hope your grace will pardon my apparent rudeness," he exclaimed; "but really Kemp brings such a lot of fellows to my rooms that I don't quite care about it."

"Aw! yaas; lot of fellahs a nuisance. Hate a lot of fellahs," replied the duke.

"I thought you were going to ride your horse Wild Irishman against Sir Sydney Dawson's Go-ahead!" remarked Davis.

"Too much trouble, my deaw fellah," answered the duke. "Nevaw ride a horse when you can get a man to do it—aw—for yeow."

"Quite so."

"Fact of mattaw is—aw—that going ovaw the course to-day, I came a nasty cropper at the first fence. Wall, must have a 'varsity man to—aw—ride for you, and so I—aw—thought of Kemp, as my trainer recommended him to me, as—aw—being—aw—a good seat, and not bad at his fences."

"I shall be very happy to ride your horse," said Kemp, who treated the young duke coolly, knowing that was the best way to manage the conceited nobleman.

"I should think you would too; lots of men would be glad of the chance," said Davis.

The duke laughed.

"Vewy good," he said. "Your anonymous friend can say a good thing. Aw—don't know his name yet."

"Davis," replied Kemp. "I forgot the formality of an introduction."

"Aw—bad plan that. Tell you a story 'bout that—aw," said the duke. "I was bathing last year in the Lake of Geneva; got the cramp; began to sink. Devilish awkward thing, you know, cramp. Ever had cramp?"

"No," said Davis.

"Aw—take my advice, and don't. Well, a man came up and wanted to save me. 'Can't let you do it,' said I. 'Don't know you.' 'I'm Count Savarin,' said he. 'Oh! if you're a gentleman,' said I, 'I don't mind. Give me your arm, please;' and so he swam me on shore."

Davis laughed.

"Good thing, that, Mr.—aw—Davis?" continued the Duke of Woodstock.

"Not bad," answered Davis. "But I think I can beat it."

"How?"

"Well, I was travelling from Marseilles to Paris. A Frenchman sat next to me. He tried to make me talk, and I wouldn't. All at once he said—'Pardon, monsieur, your cigar has set your coat on fire.'"

"Aw—what a disagweeable thing to have—aw—a coat on fire," said the duke.

" 'Thank you,' I replied, coldly. 'Perhaps, however, you'll mind your own business another time. *Your* coat has been burning this half-hour, and I didn't say anything to you.' "

This time the duke laughed in his womanly way.

"Can I offer your grace anything?" said Davis.

"Aw—thanks. S. and B., or hock and seltzer."

"You must excuse my friend in the arm-chair. He isn't very well," continued Davis, pointing to Harkaway.

The duke made a slight inclination of the head.

He was far too well-bred to ask a lot of impertinent questions.

Davis proceeded to do the honours, and opened some soda and brandy for his guest.

When his grace's thirst was quenched, he turned to Davis, and said—

"Have I—aw—your permission to talk to Mr. Kemp in—aw—your room?"

"Certainly. If you wish to talk privately, I will leave you to yourselves."

"Not at all. Weally, I pwotest against turning a man out of his own place—aw."

"Very well. Pray do as you like," said Davis.

The duke prepared to speak to Kemp about the all-important subject of the coming steeple-chase.

In reality it was important.

The whole of the sporting portion of the university had backed one horse or the other.

Therefore it excited considerable interest.

"My trainer tells me," said the Duke of Woodstock, "that you, Mr. Kemp, and Sir Sydney Dawson are the two best riders in college."

"Rough riders," said Kemp. "But rumour says Dawson can ride best."

"Rumour, my dear fellah, is an awful liar," replied the duke.

"I have seen your horse and I like him. He takes a good deal of riding, though."

"Do you—aw—think you could beat this Dawson fellah?" continued the duke.

"I'll bet a hundred to one on it, and that's long odds."

If your grace will entrust me with the mount, I'll land your colours on the post," replied Kemp.

"You shall have the mount. That's what I'm heaw for."

"You won't regret it."

"They tell me that horse of Dawson's—what do they call him?"

"Go-ahead."

"Beastly name that, but no matter. People say he's got a temper, and pulls a man out of the saddle."

"So he does."

"Yes; Dawson's horse has a deuced queer temper, and if he isn't well ridden, I wouldn't give a brass farthing for his—aw—chance."

"I've seen the brute," replied Kemp, "and his winning is all a toss-up."

"I stand to win or lose heavily on my horse," continued the duke; "and if you pull it off, my dear fellah, why I needn't—aw—say that I'll make it worth your while to ride your best."

"Give me a hundred on account," said Kemp.

"Oh, I can do that. Come to my rooms to-morrow, and you shall have a cheque. Wall, ta, ta! I can rely upon you?"

"Certainly."

The Duke of Woodstock rose, and took his leave with the same want of warmth he always exhibited.

Davis saw him to the door.

"You're in luck, old fellow," he said, as he came back.

"You may think so," replied Kemp; "but I don't like the patronising way that man Woodstock has."

"Why not?"

"He treats me like a servant."

"And you make him pay for it."

"He knows," said Kemp, "that I am the only man in Oxford who can ride his horse with half a chance of winning."

"Woodstock is reckoned a good rider."

"He was before he came up here," answered Kemp.

"Now his nerves are not worth much. It's nerve that pulls you through."

"You've a double object now in settling Dawson," put in Davis.

"Yes, and I mean to do it. I shall stop my liquoring-up. It unsteadies your hand, and makes you seedy."

"If you keep cool, it will look awfully fishy for the Dawson division."

"Leave it to me, I tell you, and if you have any spare cash, put it on," answered Kemp.

Harkaway began to move at this juncture.

He opened his eyes and threw his arms about, like one awakening from a heavy sleep.

"See him home," exclaimed Davis.

"Won't you?" asked Kemp.

"Not I. I've been mixed up enough in your rascally——"

"Hush!" whispered Kemp, putting his finger to his lips.

Jack rose up with a staggering gait, and asked where he was.

"In Davis's room. Don't you remember?" replied Kemp.

"No."

"We talked matters over, and then played a little. You lost, and went off all at once."

"Did I lose much?" said Jack.

"Nothing to fret about. Will you go to your room?"

"Yes, please; I don't feel at all well."

"It's that plucky affair of yours when you saved the girl that's made you feel ill."

"Perhaps. Give me your arm. Good-night, Davis. I am very sorry for being so rude as to go to sleep in your place," said Jack.

"Don't mention it, old fellow. Good-night. Hope you'll pick up between this and the morning. Have anything more before you go?" replied Davis.

"Not a drop, thank you."

He went out, leaning on Kemp's arm, and was very glad to get to bed.

His recollection of what had occurred was very imperfect.

He had an idea that he had made friends with Kemp and Davis, and that he had played high, but what he had lost he did not know.

The next day he did not feel at all well, and saw nothing of Kemp, whom he did not meet until he encountered him in hall, a day or two afterwards.

He endeavoured to find out how much he had lost, but Kemp answered it evasively, and told him not to trouble himself about such a flea-bite until the bill came due.

So Jack gave up thinking about it, and turned his thoughts into another direction.

When Sir Sydney Dawson heard that Kemp was going to ride the Duke of Woodstock's horse in the forthcoming steeple-chase, he was rather surprised.

Kemp was known to be a good rider.

The fact of his being patronised by the duke put him in position again, and it being known that Harkaway had been to his room, and was satisfied that his cheating at cards was a mistake, men who had formerly cut him gave him a friendly nod, shook hands, or said—"How do, Kemp?"

Sir Sydney and he went down to the stables together several times, and drank champagne together.

Harkaway saw this, and felt sure Kemp was playing a deep game.

He wanted to make Sir Sydney drink more than was good for him, so that his nervous system would be too shattered to enable him to ride.

There were only six horses entered for the race, out of which the duke's and Sir Sydney's were the two best.

Everyone agreed that the race would lie between these two cracks.

Barring the vicious temper of Sir Sydney's horse, a finer steeple-chaser never was foaled.

The St. Aldate's men had bet heavily on Go-ahead, and even Jack and Harvey had risked a few pounds.

Jack was rather shy of Kemp, feeling he had been made a fool of, though he did not guess the full extent of the villany of which he was the victim.

Having made use of him, Kemp reassumed all his old insolence.

On the night before the race, Jack and Harvey went to Sir Sydney's rooms; where they found half a dozen or more men assembled, Kemp being one of them.

Jack was pained to see how flushed and feverish Sir Sydney Dawson looked.

Kemp, on the other hand, was as cool as a cucumber, and fresher.

"You're not looking in form, old fellow," he exclaimed.

"Remember, you're not going to ride a clothes-horse to-morrow."

"Never felt better in my life," replied Sir Sydney. "It's all rot to funk a man and make him nervous by croaking."

"Woodstock's horse will take a deal of beating, that's all," continued Jack.

"It will be a walk over, won't it, Kemp?" said Sir Sydney, with a sickly smile.

"There's nothing like being cock sure," answered Kemp. "I tell you plainly, I mean to do all I know to land Woodstock's colours in the front, so you've got your work cut out for you. Wild Irishman is the stable companion of a Derby winner; and, by Jove! how your hand shakes!"

"It's nothing."

"No wonder," said Jack, "when you bustle the man."

Kemp gave him a look which said, plainly—

"What have you got to do with it? You'd better be quiet."

And then he exclaimed aloud—

"You've let yourself down too low; try some brandy."

"By Jove! Kemp's right. That's what it is; I want a nerver," replied Sir Sydney.

He poured some spirits into a tumbler, and adding—"Put in a little water," drank it off at a draught, shivering slightly as he set the glass down.

"Now I'm another man," he said, with a smile. "And I'll tell you one thing; if I can't ride Go-ahead, there isn't another fellow in Oxford who can."

There was a murmur of assent, for the dangerous temper of the horse was as well known as its owner's admirable seat and iron hand.

Drinking and smoking were kept up till a late hour, and it was remarked that Sir Sydney seemed to be seized more than once with a fit of cold shivering.

In the morning he did not appear in chapel, and just as Jack got back to his room, his scout said—

"Please, sir, you're wanted."

"Who by?" asked Jack.

"Sir Sydney Dawson has sent round for you twice, sir."

"Has he? By Jove! I hope there is nothing wrong," said Jack.

He hastened to see his friend, whom he found in bed.

Sir Sydney was very ill ; his hands burned like hot coals, his eyes were sunken, and flashed with feverish brilliancy, and it was clear that he was not in a fit state to ride.

Much shocked Jack cried—

"That infernal fellow, Kemp, has done this. He's made a tool of me to ruin you."

"Bosh !" replied Sir Sydney ; "I'm all right. It's only a funny feeling that's come over me all at once. Don't stand staring at me, for goodness' sake. Do something."

"You must have a doctor."

"Doctor be hanged ! Give me some brandy in a cup of strong tea."

"I saw how it would be," continued Jack. "And now you can't ride the race. You said it would be a walk-over, and so it will, for Kemp."

"I'll be shot if it shall be, if I can crawl to the course," cried Sir Sydney, fiercely. "What, have Go-ahead scratched, and let that sneering blackleg brute Kemp have the laugh of us ? Not for a cool thou, my boy ; you don't know me."

"I know you've got the pluck of half a dozen," answered Jack ; "but neither you nor any other man can do impossibilities. You are not well enough to stir out. Can't you get some one to ride for you ?"

"No one can ride that horse but me. It's breakneck work ; look at the jumps. Give me your hand ; I'll get up."

Jack assisted him to dress.

He trembled like a leaf, and was as weak as a rat.

"I'm bound to ride," he said. "Look how all our fellows have backed me. Go-ahead must not be scratched. I will ride, if I can't hold the reins. What sort of a morning is it ?"

"Dull, but dry."

"I've got a film over my eyes ; can't see anything well," continued Sir Sydney. "Hang the luck. I shouldn't have cared at any other time."

His scout made him some tea, and was sent to order the dog-cart, to drive them over to the course, which was about ten miles from Oxford.

"So you mean to go ?" said Jack.

"Of course I do. You'll see me stick on like a monkey as a circus. I'll ride Go-ahead, or die in the attempt."

Seeing it was useless to dissuade him, Jack gave it up.

"What are your colours?" he asked.

"Blue and white. What do you want to know for?"

"Nothing," said Jack, evasively. "You won't start for an hour? Sit still while I go to my room; I'll be back soon."

When Jack returned Dawson was pacing the room impatiently.

He had been drinking more brandy, which increased the fever in his veins.

"What an age you've been. Come along; we shall be last on the course," he exclaimed.

Jack gave him his arm, and walking to the stables, got into the dog-cart.

"You drive; I can't hold the ribbons to-day," said Dawson. "Cut out the pace; we're late, and the Woodstock division will say we are showing the feather."

Touching up the horse, Jack was soon spinning along the High and over the bridge, along the Iffley Road, to the course.

"He'll never be able to do it," muttered Jack. "It's a hundred to one against him, and that's long odds."

And so it was.

The poor, pale, tremulous young man by his side did not look as if he could sit a donkey on Hampstead Heath, let alone a racehorse with the vicious temper of Go-ahead.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RACE.

THE Oxford men mustered rather strongly on the course.

A large number of gentlemen, ladies, and country people had assembled to see the steeple-chase, for which only five horses were entered.

The Duke of Woodstock's horse was made favourite at two to one, and the second in popular estimation was Sir Sydney Dawson's Go-ahead.

When they reached the course, which was carefully

laid out with the usual fences and ditches, Jack took a good look at it.

The water jump was a formidable one, but the last of all seemed most difficult.

It was formed naturally by a lane, having on each side a stiff hedge, and a drop of several feet in the middle.

They were soon surrounded by an admiring knot of St. Aldate's men, who regarded Sir Sydney critically.

"Who said he wouldn't turn up?" said Tom Carden, the man of flesh and muscle.

"Whoever did made a confounded mistake," replied Sir Sydney.

"You don't look quite the cheese," said Fabian Hall. "A little feverish, I should think, which isn't the thing to brace a man's nerve up."

"You go to Hampstead Heath, Fabian, my innocent," replied Jack; "that's your riding-school, I should think."

"I'm all right. Let's go and look at the horse, Harkaway," exclaimed Sir Sydney.

At this moment Kemp strolled up arm in arm with Davis.

A smile of satisfaction was on his lips as he saw the state Dawson was in.

"Glad to see you," he said. "Are we going to have a mild bet on the event?"

"I'll back my mount of course," answered Sir Sydney.

"Done with you, then, for fifty. We shall have a struggle for it."

The bet was made, and Sir Sydney strolled away with Jack.

"I don't like to think of the money I have at stake," said Sir Sydney. "I've put the pot on tremendously, and stand to lose or win a regular hatful."

As he spoke, a fit of cold shivering seized him and he could scarcely stand.

"Let's go to the stand and have some brandy," he continued. "Hang me if I ever felt so queer before."

"Take my advice and don't. You're not strong enough to drink," replied Jack; "and throw that cigar away, it is only making you nervous."

In the paddock, Sir Sydney's trainer, Morsom, was standing by Go-ahead.

"There's the horse," said Sir Sydney. "Isn't he a

beauty?—and like a good many other beauties, he's got an infernal temper. Steeple-chasing is not like racing on the flat. If I don't stick on, I shall run a chance of breaking my neck, and losing the race into the bargain."

"Which would be the greater misfortune?" asked Jack.

"Of course, the greater embraces the less. If I broke my neck, I could not win, because I should not be able to ride it out. Call Morsom, will you?"

Jack beckoned to the trainer, who at once approached.

"Morning, Sir Sydney," said Morsom. "The horse is in splendid form, quiet as a kitten—rather too quiet. When he's like that he generally breaks out, sooner or later."

"I'll break his heart if he tries any of his tricks with me," answered Sir Sydney, with a spice of his usual dash.

"Time's nearly up, sir," said the trainer.

"Ah, so it is," replied Sir Sydney, looking at his watch. "Take the horse a little way up the course; the crowd may frighten him here."

He tried to move away, but the old staggering feeling came over him, and the hectic on his face burnt brighter.

"Take my arm. You are weak," said Jack.

"Stuff!" said Sir Sydney. "I tell you I'm all right. It's this beastly lightheadedness—bilious, I suppose. I feel as weak as a rat."

"Give it up."

"What, sell all my friends? Who's to ride the horse? That scoundrel Kemp will laugh at me. Not I."

He spoke loudly, and grew more excited every minute.

Just then Kemp, accompanied by the Duke of Woodstock, passed by on their road to the weighing-room.

"How do, Dawson?" said the duke, stopping. "Hope—aw—you won't cut us down too early in the—aw—race. Let us—aw—be in it."

"The St. Aldate's gentleman jock doesn't look like winning," remarked Kemp.

He spoke in a low tone, intended only for the duke's ear, but Dawson caught the words.

"Look here, Mr. Kemp," he exclaimed. "I don't allow anyone to make disparaging remarks about me."

Kemp turned round and faced him.

"Suppose you can't help it, my good fellow, what then?" he said, in a voice of cool insolence.

"You're a low scoundrel, sir!" cried Sir Sydney, losing his temper, and forgetting himself altogether. "That I tell you to your face."

"Why?" asked Kemp, grating his teeth.

"You've been betting against my horse, sir, and you have brought me to the state I am in. Don't think I'm a fool. I can see it all, now it's too late. But I'll beat you yet. Go-ahead can win, and it will punish you far more to lose your dirty money than to be kicked."

Kemp was about to make an angry reply.

His cheeks burned, and his fists were tightly clenched.

But the Duke of Woodstock pulled him away, saying—

"Keep cool. If you excite yourself now, you will lose your nerve, and—aw—lose me the race."

"All right, your grace," replied Kemp. "I'll pocket the insult for your sake."

They went on to the weighing-room, where they had been preceded by all the other riders except Sir Sydney.

"The low cad! How I hate that fellow," said Sir Sydney.

"So do I," replied Jack. "I heard him say he should either lose over a thousand, or win three. It's a pity you picked up with him again."

"I've got to thank you for the honour of his renewed acquaintance."

"So you have. I am to blame. Never mind; the race is not lost yet," answered Jack, setting his lips firmly together, as if thinking of a difficult task he had set himself to perform.

Tom Carden and a few of the St. Aldate's division followed them to the weighing-room.

The clerk of the course was there, and he exclaimed—

"Now, Sir Sydney, you are the last. All have gone to the post but you."

Dawson made an effort to pull himself together, but failed utterly.

His head swam, and he reeled about dangerously, so much so, that his backers looked at him in consternation.

"It's come on again," he gasped. "I'm no more use than an old hat full of cold water. I'd ride if I could. By gad! I will ride."

"You shall not," said Jack, in a tone of decision. "It would be madness for you to do so. I appeal to Carden."

"Looks grave," replied Carden. "Don't see how he can stick on."

"I'll go and hedge my bets," remarked a St. Aldate's man.

"Time's up, sir," said the clerk.

Sir Sydney made an attempt to pull off his coat, but the dizziness came on again.

"I can't make out what the devil's the matter with me," he said. "It's my belief Kemp must have poisoned me."

"Not at all unlikely," replied Jack, thinking of what had happened to himself in Davis's room.

"What's to be done? I can't declare forfeit. Will you give me an idea, Carden? My heart will break if I have to scratch Go-ahead."

"The horse shall run. Don't worry yourself," said Jack.

"How can he, when there isn't a man in Oxford, bar myself, who would trust himself on the brute's back?" asked Sir Sydney.

"I will ride him," exclaimed Jack.

"You?"

"Yes; I prepared for this. Trust your honour and your money in my hands. I can do most things pretty well. Leave it to me."

"My dear fellow, how can I thank you? I didn't know you could ride."

"I'll try, anyhow. Stand on one side, please."

As he spoke, Jack threw off his coat.

Under his trousers he had a capital get-up of breeches and boots.

In a short time he was arrayed in the baronet's colours.

They fixed a pair of spurs on his boots, put the cap on his head, and he looked every inch a jockey, bred and born.

"Look here, old man," said Jack to Dawson, "you go and borrow a binocular, and take up your position in the stand. Put on the coin, if you're in the humour; I'm not going to let Kemp beat me. Please goodness, I'll cut him down on the post, if your horse is the flyer they say he is."

Sir Sydney grasped his hand in silent gratitude.

"That's right. Hook on to Carden," continued Jack, "and don't funk about me."

Just as Jack emerged from the room, Morsom the trainer came up.

"Are you going to ride, Mr. Harkaway!" he exclaimed, in surprise.

"Yes. Dawson's not himself to-day."

"I thought not, and am very glad of the change. Go-ahead takes a good deal of riding, sir, but if ever there was a funny-tempered horse, it is Sir Sydney's."

"I've been outside a horse before to-day, and my nerve is like iron. Besides, Morsom, I've got an interest in knocking Mr. Kemp out of time. Where is the horse?"

"Where Sir Sydney told me to have him, sir, a little way up the course. Come along, there's no time to be lost."

"I know that," replied Jack, as he threw his overcoat round his shoulders, and dived into the crowd.

They soon reached the horse, and Morsom held him while Jack mounted.

No one would have thought there was a lurking devil in the horse, he seemed so calm and amiable.

Morsom handed Jack a whip, and said—

"Don't hit him if you can help it, sir. He's a fiend when he's whipped."

Jack nodded and walked the horse down to the starting-place.

The field of five had already assembled.

Woodstock was speaking to Kemp, but he left off as Jack appeared on Go-ahead.

"That's not Dawson!" exclaimed the duke, forgetting his affected manner in his surprise.

Kemp turned pale.

"By Jove," he answered, "it's that infernal Harkaway. The only man in Oxford I should have been at all afraid of."

"Can he ride?"

"What is it he can't do? The beggar can do every thing, but I think he has got his master in Go-ahead. I know more of the horse than he does, and if he hasn't some bones broken in less than half an hour, say I'm a false prophet."

Morsom ran up to Jack's side, and whispered—

"Perhaps you don't know the course, sir? There's a

very nasty double jump, just before the run in, an in-and-out jump, and there's a bullfinch—that's a stiffish hedge—and the water-jump, which I should give him his head at and chance it."

"All right," replied Jack.

The horses formed into a line, and went towards the starting-post.

The duke's horse, Wild Irishman, seemed full of going, and the very picture of a race-horse.

The others were well bred, but did not seem to have staying power.

It was not difficult to start so small a field, and amid breathless expectation they went off directly the flag fell.

"Now for it," thought Jack, and he took a look at Kemp, who sat his animal splendidly, and seemed to have him well in hand.

The course was about four miles, and the ground of a stiffish character.

At the first fence, Amy, a dark horse ridden by a Merton man, fell and broke his leg, reducing the field to four runners.

Ploughing their way across a turnip field, all lying well together, they came to the second obstacle, which was a flight of hurdles.

The fourth horse failed to leap the hurdles, and pitched his rider off badly.

He was so much hurt with the purler that he did not mount again, but was carried off the course.

"Only three left," thought Jack.

Knowing the speed of Go-ahead, he determined to force the pace, being especially anxious, as Kemp, on the Irishman, was slightly leading.

Wild Irishman was a bay horse, while Sir Sydney's was as black as night.

It was easy to distinguish them from the stand, and the backers of each were wild with excitement as they watched the race.

Jack had been holding his horse well in hand, but he gave him his head, and he at once shot in front.

When the water-jump was reached, the two leaders cleared it well, but the third horse refused it three times, whereby so much time was lost, that the rider gave up the race in disgust, and slowly returned.

Then the field was reduced to two.

It was a race between Jack and Kemp.

In front of Jack was the bullfinch, of which the trainer had spoken, and a formidable jump it was.

Kemp lifted Wild Irishman and cleared it beautifully, amidst the applause of the spectators who had assembled at this point.

The roar of voices frightened Go-ahead, who now began to show the nasty temper for which he had made himself famous.

Rearing up on his hind legs, he pawed the air, and endeavoured to unseat his rider.

It was a struggle for mastery between man and horse.

Jack was mad with rage at seeing Kemp galloping over the neighbouring ploughed field, holding the Irishman well in hand, and looking like winning in an easy canter.

Raising his whip in the air, he brought it down once, twice, three times between the horse's ears.

The infuriated animal uttered a snort of passion, lowered his legs, put back his ears, and taking the bit in his mouth, flew at the obstacle in front of him.

In vain Jack pulled at the bridle.

He had no more control over the animal than one of the spectators.

A few yards more, and they would be at the fence.

Jack turned very pale, settled himself well in his seat, dug his knees in, and waited for the shock.

Go-ahead seemed forgetful of the fence, for, instead of trying to clear it, he dashed blindly at it, crashing through somehow, falling on his knees on the other side, and throwing his rider badly.

Jack lay insensible for a moment on the ground, the blood trickling from an ugly wound in his forehead.

Tom Carden happened to have selected this spot, and when he saw Jack fall, he rushed to his assistance, while another man held the horse, which was now trembling violently all over.

Jack was beginning to open his eyes.

CHAPTER XIV.

JACK GETS A DISAGREEABLE LETTER.

"Now, then, old fellow," said Tom Carden; "you're not much hurt. Up with you—quick!"

Jack staggered to his feet, and looked giddily round him.

"Where's Kemp?" asked he.

"Not far ahead. He's pounding through the turnips. Jump up."

With Carden's assistance, Jack climbed into the saddle again, but dropped the whip, which he did not seem able to hold.

"Force the pace, my lad, and you'll do it," continued Carden.

Jack wiped the blood out of his eyes, and nodded his head.

Then he dug his cruel spurs, for the first time, deep into the horse's flanks, and away they flew like lightning after Kemp.

"He's had a nasty purler," mused Carden, "but he may pull it off yet."

At the next fence, Wild Irishman swerved and would not take it, which occasioned a most valuable delay to Jack, who, as he decreased the distance between them, could hear Kemp's loud curses.

There was but about fifty yards between them, which, after jumping the fence, Jack reduced to thirty.

Only one jump remained now between them and home.

This was the dangerous leap, formed by a lane, with hedges on each side of it.

The excitement on the stand was immense.

Sir Sydney Dawson was trembling in every limb, while the Duke of Woodstock, who stood near him, was cool, calm and confident.

"Irishman wins—it's a dead moral!" exclaimed Frank Davis. "I'll lay six to four on him!"

"I'll take you," replied Sir Sydney; "six twenties."

"Again?" asked Davis, as he booked the bet.

"Yes, again."

"He must be mad. Go-ahead isn't in it. They are close home now," muttered Davis to the duke.

"Look at Kemp. By Jove! he rides well," said the Duke of Woodstock. "I couldn't have—aw—trusted my mount to a better man."

"Watch him," cried Davis, who, a good rider himself, could appreciate excellent horsemanship in another. "See he takes the lane in and out like an otter. Bravo! Now he makes for home, and it is a clear run in."

Jack was just behind Kemp, but as scarcely a hundred yards remained between them and the winning-post, he saw he must lose if he popped in and out as Kemp had done.

With a characteristic recklessness, he determined to take the two jumps together, and clear the lane at one flying leap.

It was a desperate expedient, but the only one which gave him a chance.

The hoarse shouts of the crowd and the bookmakers fell upon his ears.

He knew the power of his horse, which was full of running.

"It's neck or nothing," he muttered.

And he began to bustle Go-ahead, who, better tempered now some of the devilry had been knocked out of him, had settled down into a splendid stride.

"Go it, my beauty! We shall do it yet," said Jack, digging his spurs in deep.

Away they flew.

The horse rose in the air, and crossed the lane like a bird, amidst the breathless silence of the spectators.

"By gad! he's going to fly it! He's done it. By gad! finest thing I ever saw," cried the duke, lost in admiration.

"Bravo, Harkaway! Well done indeed!" exclaimed Sir Sydney.

Jack passed on after the Irishman like an arrow from a bow, gaining at every stride.

Now he was laying close to his haunches, the post was before them.

The judge was straining his eyes; it looked so like a dead heat.

The clamour was deafening.

With a desperate effort Jack pushed on Go-ahead, and cutting down Kemp, won by sheer pluck on the post by a head.

He rode into the enclosure, looking ghastly pale, his clothes covered with mud and his face smeared with blood.

Weighing in all right, he was surrounded by St. Aldate's men, foremost amongst whom was Sir Sydney, who shook him by the hand.

"My dear fellow," he said, "how can I thank you?"

"By first of all saying nothing about it, and secondly by getting me something to drink," replied Jack.

"Are you hurt?"

"Just a little about the chump. I can scarcely see anything, but I suppose it will go off. It was a beastly bad purl at the fence."

They led him to the stand, and a band played "See, the Conquering Hero Comes."

While he was refreshing himself with champagne, the Duke of Woodstock and his supporters were looking very blank indeed.

Having made use of Kemp, the duke treated him with an aristocratic insolence which he did not expect.

"Did my best for you, your grace," said Kemp, biting his lips till the blood came.

"Ah, yes. You are Kemp, I believe?" replied the duke.

"Rode your horse just now"

"Ya-as; wode my horse—ya-as. Lost the wace, I think?"

"Unfortunately I did."

The duke fixed his glass in his eye, and having stared coolly at Kemp, turned his back upon him and began to talk to one of his friends.

Kemp flushed angrily at this insolence, which was hard to bear.

He sought Davis, who had watched the scene with some amusement.

"What do you think of that?" asked Kemp.

"Never saw such a lovely snub in my life before. He did it splendidly," laughed Davis.

"It's no laughing matter," growled Kemp. "I've lost a pot of money which I can't afford, and after I had made cock sure of winning."

"If Harkaway hadn't risked the lane, you'd have been all right.

"No one but he would have thought of such a thing, or have dared to attempt it. He's a demon," snarled Kemp.

"Haven't I always told you so? Well, I'm five hundred pounds poorer by it."

"What's that to you? You've got a father."

"Lucky beast, am I not?" answered Davis, complacently stroking his moustache.

Completely discomfited, the pair slunk away together, not staying for the other race, which was to be ridden by farmers, and had little interest for university men.

After drinking nearly a bottle of champagne, Jack felt better, though his nerves were so shaken he was scarcely equal to driving back to college.

Nor was Sir Sydney any better.

In this emergency Tom Carden came to the rescue, and volunteered to handle the reins.

Sir Sydney, in addition to his illness, had been drinking too much.

Carden saw this, and said—

"He'll never hold on in a dog-cart. What's to be done with him?"

"Put him in the boot," suggested Jack.

The hint was acted upon.

Sir Sydney was led to the trap; some clean straw was put inside the hollow part, or boot, where the dogs generally ride, and the baronet, making no resistance, was shut up and conveyed safely to Oxford.

He had to lay up for a day or two, and so had Jack, but they soon got better.

After the race, Kemp found himself as much cut as he was before.

The Duke of Woodstock sent his scout with a cheque for his services, but did not recognise him in public.

Jack simply nodded to him when they met, and Sir Sydney gave him the cold shoulder unmistakably.

Time slipped away.

Jack made friends with Mr. Mole, and went up to his rooms in St. Giles's to read.

He also kept his lectures, and went into training for the boat-race.

the coxswain of the university boat, always on the look-out for recruits, did not fail to see Jack in the St. Aldate's boat.

He spoke to Carden about him, and it was determined to put him in the eight.

Jack was delighted at the prospect of rowing for his university at Putney, against Cambridge, at Easter.

As he was obliged to train strictly, he was unable to keep late hours and attend supper parties.

So he gradually dropped out of the fast set, though he kept up Sir Sydney's acquaintance.

At breakfast one morning, Monday came in with a note.

"What is it? Some dun, I suppose," said Jack.

"A boy leave um, sare, replied Monday.

Jack opened it carelessly, but he had no sooner glanced over the contents than he turned pale.

The letter was from Mr. Moses Manasses, of the Corn Market, who presented his compliments to Mr. Harkaway and begged to give him notice that his bill for £1,000 became payable that day week.

Leaving his breakfast unfinished, Jack ran with the letter to Sir Sydney, who was lying on his sofa smoking two cigars at once, one in each hand.

"What's ruffled your highness's feathers?" inquired Sir Sydney.

"You know I went to Davis's room to meet Kemp?" said Jack.

"Just before the race. Yes."

"Well, they got me to play and made me tight. I lost some money, though I did not think it much."

"And you've got to pay it, I suppose, and you haven't the cash; don't care to write to the governor in your first term, and come to an old bird like myself for advice. Is that it?"

"Not far off," said Jack.

"Well, I should say renew the bill. If you want fifty, you can have it, that is all I can command at present," replied Sir Sydney.

"Thank you all the same, dear boy, fifty would be but a drop in the ocean."

"Oh, if you went in for gambling that is another thing. What's the total?"

"Read the letter."

Sir Sydney did so.

Springing up with an indignant flush, and throwing his cigars away, Sir Sydney exclaimed—

“The infernal scoundrel! You have been shamefully rooked. A thousand quid, eh? Why, it’s as much as a man ought to spend up here in three years.”

“It’s ruination to me. What can I do? If I were to show the letter to my father, he would pay the bill, but he would take me away from Oxford, and that would break my heart just as I’ve got into the ’varsity eight, and am likely to bat in the eleven.”

“You see, if you were to fight it and go to law, it might turn out no bottle,” replied Sir Sydney, thoughtfully.

“Can I not fight them?” asked Jack.

“There is no defence to an action on a bill of exchange, unless you make an affidavit of fraud.”

“So there was a fraud.”

“Ay, I don’t doubt that, but Davis will swear there wasn’t. You have got odds against you. It’s two to one.”

“It’s a gambling debt.”

“You might fight on that ground, but you would have it in the papers, and it would not do you any good,” replied Sir Sydney; “because, you see, Harkaway, it’s a debt of honour, and gentlemen as a rule are very particular about their debts of honour.”

Jack sank back in a chair and groaned.

Kemp had cast his net cleverly around him, and he and Davis could enjoy their triumph.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MONEY-LENDER’S DAUGHTER.

HARKAWAY had fancied that his debt to Kemp would be easily covered by about fifty or a hundred pounds at the outside.

This he had hoped to save out of his allowance, and taking a lesson by it, never be so foolish again.

The enormous amount of a thousand pounds was sufficient to crush him.

If he paid it off by instalments, it would keep him poor for a long time.

"Kemp and Davis are a disgrace to St. Aldate's," said Dawson, who was furious. "The dean ought to be told of their conduct."

"Then he would know of mine too. That won't do," replied Jack.

"Tell you what, you must go to Manasses. He's an awful old Jew, but not a bad fellow at heart."

"I will ; at once," said Jack.

"Besides, don't you recollect you saved the old cock's daughter, and he told you he should always be grateful?"

"Of course," said Jack, brightening. "I had forgotten that the girl I pulled out of the river was Manasses' daughter."

"The lovely Hilda might intercede for you."

"Not in business, I'm afraid," replied Jack, with a dismal shake of the head.

"Perhaps you're right. Jews show Christians no mercy in money matters ; they are all Shylocks."

"Fancy Kemp bolting right off to Manasses with the bill. That's how he was able to square up his losses on the steeple-chase which I know were very heavy," said Jack.

"The money has done him no good," remarked Sir Sydney. "I shall horsewhip that fellow some day in the street."

"I shall kick him like a cur," exclaimed Jack ; "but just now, I can only think about getting out of this mess."

"Go to old Mossy ; you can't do better," said Dawson.

"Will you wait till I come back ? No, you can't, you've got to go to Mole's."

"I shan't to-day ; nor you either," answered the baronet. "We're both of us too upset for work. I'll tool you over to Abingdon, and we'll chop there ; what do you say?"

"Very well. I shan't be long," replied Jack.

He hastened away to the Corn Market, which he soon reached, and knocking at the door of Mr. Manasses' house, was shown into the drawing-room by a tidily-dressed maid servant.

"Mr. Manasses is out, sir," she said.

"When do you expect him?" said Jack.

"It's rather uncertain; perhaps Miss Hilda can inform you. I will tell her you are here. Who shall I say?"

"Mr. Harkaway, St. Aldate's College."

Jack was left alone for a few minutes, and had an opportunity of examining the drawing-room, which was splendidly furnished.

No expense had been spared, but it was not so much the value of the articles in the room that struck the visitor as the refinement with which everything was selected and arranged.

Pictures by ancient and modern masters hung upon the walls.

At the end of the room was a conservatory from which came a delicious perfume.

In one part of the conservatory was an aviary, and the air was melodious with the songs of birds.

The furniture was of ancient carved oak, and the carpet the richest Turkey.

"By Jove!" thought Jack, "the old boy must have some coin, and he knows how to spend it."

Presently Hilda entered the room, looking ravishingly beautiful in a morning costume of blue and white, which suited her admirably.

She was very different from the stately and formal girl who had spoken to him on the night of the town and gown riot, when he and his companions sought refuge in her father's house.

A pleasant smile lit up her countenance, and extending her hand frankly, she said—

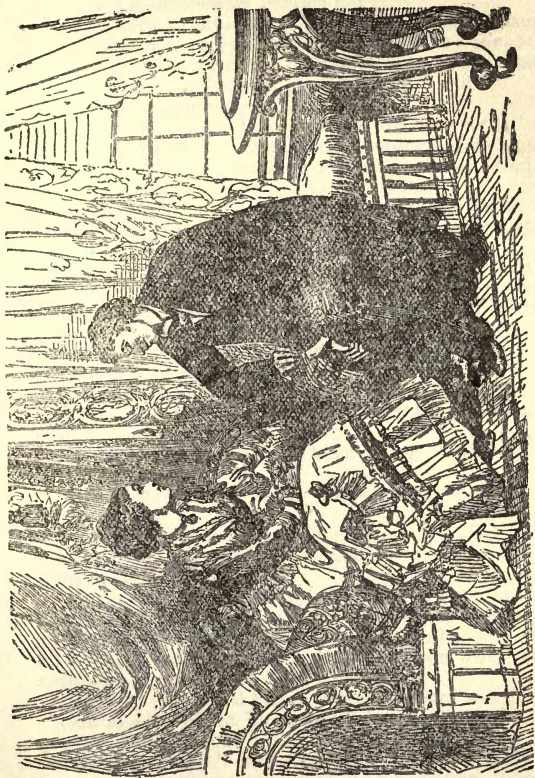
"Why have you not been to see us before, Mr. Harkaway? You might have known that you would be a welcome guest."

Jack muttered something about not liking to intrude.

"Indeed," Hilda continued, "your presence would not have been an intrusion; far from it. Neither I nor my father have forgotten that you saved my life."

"I am sure I was amply recompensed for that slight service by your father's thanks at the time," answered Jack.

"Do you wish to see my father on business, or is this merely a friendly visit?" she asked.



“NEITHER I NOR MY FATHER HAVE FORGOTTEN THAT YOU SAVED MY LIFE.”
*Oxford, * page 100.*

"Well, in part, I have come on business."

A shade of displeasure crossed her face.

"I am very unfortunate to be a money-lender's daughters," she replied sadly, "we seem to have no friends in the world. Everyone who calls upon papa has an interested motive; but I expect papa in every minute."

"Shall I be troubling you if I wait?"

"Not in the least. I should very much prefer it," she answered quickly. "I will take advantage of the opportunity to thank you for the favour you have conferred on me. I have so much wished to meet you."

"Pray say no more about that," exclaimed Jack. "I was only too pleased to think I happened to be near at the time your boat was swamped."

"Papa will never forget you. If you want money, he will lend it to you without interest. I verily believe all you young gentlemen want money, do you not? Oxford is such an expensive place!"

"I don't think I am very fast," cried Jack; "but I am in need of your father's services."

"You shall have what you want; leave that to me."

"The thing is the other way, Mr. Manasses wants money from me," exclaimed Jack.

"Indeed. Then you have been doing what they call bills."

"The fact is, I have been shamefully robbed," replied Jack.

"Robbed? That is a hard word to use, Mr. Harkaway," she said. "I hope you do not accuse my father of any complicity in the matter."

"Oh, no, no!" Jack hastened to say. "Mr. Manasses had nothing to do with it. Shall I tell you the story? I don't care about talking business to ladies, but you are so kind, that I will venture to trespass upon your goodness."

"Pray do; I should like to hear the story," she cried.

Jack told her about Davis and Kemp, and how they had got the bill for £1,000 out of him.

"It is infamous!" she exclaimed. "Papa would never have lent himself in any way to the transaction, if he had known it. Why did you not come to me earlier?"

"I did not know what Mr. Kemp was going to do with the bill," replied Jack.

"Something must be done. At all events, papa will not—shall not press you," she exclaimed.

There was a sharp click of a key in the lock of the front door, and a heavy footstep in the passage.

"That is papa," she continued. "Will you go to his room? It is the next one to this. Good-bye, Mr. Harkaway. May we hope to have the pleasure of seeing you again soon?"

"Thank you! I shall know my way now," he answered, taking leave of her.

Going to the office, he found Mr. Manasses seated at a desk with his spectacles on his nose, pen in hand, and a ledger open before him.

"My name is Harkaway," began Jack.

"Ah, yes, Mr. Harkaway, of St. Aldate's, freshman in his first term. You received a note from me, I believe?" inquired the Jew.

"Yes, and that is why I am here. Will you allow me to tell you the history of that bill of mine which you hold?"

"Certainly. Take a chair, if you please," cried Manasses.

In a few words Jack related to him how he had been, as he supposed, drugged and robbed by means of loaded dice.

The Jew heard him attentively.

"Am I to understand that you mean to defend any action I may be entitled to bring against you?" he inquired.

"No," replied Jack. "I cannot defend the action, because it is a debt of honour."

"That is spoken like a gentleman. I have given value for the bill. Nine hundred golden sovereigns Mr. Kemp had from me."

"Were you not afraid to advance so much on my name?" asked Jack.

"I had my channels of information, and I found that you were not in debt, and that your relations are rich; and now, what are you going to do?"

"I don't know."

"Can you pay?" asked Manasses.

"I cannot. It is utterly impossible at present. If you will renew, I will pay you so much a year for the use of

the money. Say fifty pounds a year ; that will be five per cent."

"Well, I am not going to be hard on you," replied the Jew. "I will renew, and you can pay the interest. Have you seen my daughter?"

"Yes. I have had that pleasure."

"Allow me to add my thanks to hers for the service you rendered us."

"I have already been overwhelmed by Miss Hilda," answered Jack.

"Will you come and see us occasionally? And if you want money at any time, my cheque-book is at your service on easy terms."

Jack was overjoyed at the way in which the money-lender had received him.

He thanked him over and over again, promised to let him have the interest of the bill soon, and to visit him in the evening before long.

"Hilda can sing and play. Her education has not been neglected. We can smoke our cigars, and you will not despise my claret," replied the Jew.

Jack went back to his college delighted.

He had escaped the danger which threatened him more easily than he had expected.

But he did not know the crafty nature of the Jew.

He had in reality got out of one plot only to fall into the meshes of another.

Hilda had conceived an attachment for the handsome young fellow who had saved her life.

It was the Jew's object so to get Jack into his power as to make him marry his daughter.

Manasses did not know anything about his engagement to Emily, and considered his gold, coupled with Hilda's beauty, quite sufficient to cause an impressionable young man to fall an easy prey to his snares.

When Jack was gone, Mr. Manasses sought his daughter, who was listlessly playing with the flowers in the conservatory.

"You have seen him?" he inquired.

"Yes, papa, and he has told me his story. You have consented not to press him?" she asked.

"He shall not be pressed as long as he falls in with my

views. Have you still the fondness for the youth that you confessed to me some time back?"

"I have," she answered, blushing.

"You could choose him for a husband?"

She made no answer, but her rising colour too well disclosed her secret.

"He shall be yours; it is only a question of time. At present he is in my toils; I will drag him deeper and deeper. Let your beauty do the rest," exclaimed Moses Manasses.

He tenderly loved his daughter, having but one wish, and that was that she should marry a gentleman whom she could love.

Jack was everything that a romantic young girl's fancy could desire.

He was handsome, courageous, clever, and some day he would be very rich.

Hilda sank into a chair, and gave herself up to delightful reveries.

She loved Jack.

Her father had promised her that he should be her husband.

When did Moses Manasses, the rich money-lender of the Corn Market, ever fail to keep his word?

CHAPTER XVI.

MURDER IN THE DARK.

JACK did not even tell Harvey about the bill.

The secret was kept by himself and Sir Sydney, for he would not have had Mr. Bedington know anything about it for the world.

He paid several visits to the money-lender's house, passing very agreeable evenings.

Hilda would play and sing to him, and neither she nor her father ever grew tired of listening to his yarns about Pisangs and Limbians, and all the adventures he had been engaged in among the islands of the East Indian Archipelago.

After a time he met Hilda and took her for walks in the Christ Church meadows and other places.

Harvey met him one day with Hilda hanging on his arm, and coming to his rooms after hall, spoke to him about it.

"Well, what harm is there?" asked Jack.

"Oh, I don't know exactly what harm there is," replied Harvey. "You are the best judge of that."

"Cannot a man walk about innocently with a pretty girl?"

"Possibly."

"You're jealous, Dick, my boy, and are sorry you haven't the chance," said Jack, laughing.

"No, I'm not. It isn't that. You get yourself talked about."

"By whom?"

"I heard Kemp and Davis in hall saying you were getting nicely into old Manasses' ribs, and making use of his daughter to do it."

"Mr. Kemp had better keep his tongue between his teeth, the blackguard!" exclaimed Jack, savagely.

"Besides," continued Harvey, "you are engaged to Emily, you know, and it is not fair to spoon another girl."

"I don't spoon her."

"Then she is spooney on you. I can see it in her eyes. If you don't mean anything fair and honest towards the girl you've no right to make a fool of her," replied Harvey.

"Why do you talk to me like that?" said Jack.

"Because I'm your friend."

Jack lighted a pipe and began to smoke savagely.

"You've got a way of saying disagreeable things," he exclaimed. "But you may be right after all, Dick. I never looked at it in the light you do."

There was a knock at the door, and opening it, Monday admitted Kemp.

"Is your master in, you black imp?" he asked.

"Me go see, sare. Um wait here please," replied Monday.

"I'll see you hanged first," said Kemp, pushing into the room.

Jack was surprised to see Kemp, and said—

"Monday, why did you not tell Mr. Kemp I was engaged? You know I said I was not in to anybody."

"Mist' Kemp him push um way in, sare. Monday no able to stop him."

"It's like Mr. Kemp's confounded impudence, then," said Jack.

"Oh, don't alarm yourself. I'm not going to stay," returned Kemp; "I only looked in for a moment to ask a question."

"That's a comfort," said Jack.

"Your society is not so very fascinating, you needn't flatter yourself."

"Perhaps not. I have no dice to-night, and don't feel inclined to be drugged."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Kemp, flushing angrily.

"Percisely what I say."

"Of course your're rather raw over that bill," replied Kemp, checking his rising anger. "That's what I came about. How have you got on?"

"Find out!" answered Jack, curtly.

"If I can give you any help in holding it over, I will."

"Thank you, I require no help from you."

"I suppose you work the old man through the daughter. A very creditable way of doing business; more especially as you are an engaged man," sneered Kemp.

"Leave my room, sir," said Jack, rising.

"I'm in no hurry," answered Kemp.

"If you don't go, I shall have to make you. I don't care for the company of a liar and a thief," said Jack.

"What do you call me?" asked Kemp, all the blood going out of his thin white face.

"I'll repeat it if you like. Mr. Harvey heard my remarks."

"You shall repent this! By Heaven! you shall be sorry for uttering those words," said Kemp.

"Make yourself scarce," cried Jack, "or by Jove! I will trot you out at the end of my boot."

Kemp tried to speak, but was unable to, through rage.

He walked rapidly away, and slammed the door violently behind him.

"What a murderous-looking scoundrel he is," remarked Harvey. "By the way, what did he mean about a bill?"

"Oh, only a trifling matter. He rooked me one night in Davis's rooms. It's all right."

"I never liked the man," cried Harvey. "To-day I saw him in Castle Street, talking to a one-armed man."

"One-armed!" said Jack, thinking of Hunston. "Did you see his face?"

"No, he darted round a corner before I could come up."

"It couldn't have been Hunston, could it?"

"Not likely. We left Hunston in the East. There are lots of old soldiers with only one arm, you know."

"So there are," said Jack.

He became very thoughtful, and his mind was carried back to the days when he was a castaway amongst the people of Limbi, and Hunston was the chief of the Pisang nation.

In the evening, Jack went to Fabian Hall's rooms.

They were reading Herodotus together and Jack had taken a great liking to the quiet, steady man, who made no secret of his ambition to come out among the first.

When they had finished their work, Hall said—

"Come out for a stroll for an hour. It will do us good."

"Where shall we go?" asked Jack.

"Over Magdalen Bridge, and up the Iffley Road."

"Very well. I'll just go to my rooms and leave word for Dawson if he comes. He promised to look me up, this evening."

Jack was not long gone, and when he returned, Hall was ready for the walk.

"Shall we go down to the 'Three Cups,' in the High Street, and get just one glass of their old Oxford ale!" he asked.

"I would much rather not. We can send to the buttery for some. There is always the chance of being followed by the proctors if one goes into a pub., and I don't want to be proctorised."

"All right. I'm in training, and perhaps I am better without it," replied Jack.

"You fast fellows are like sponge," remarked Hall, as they walked up the High.

"Why?"

"You've got a perpetual power of absorbing or mopping up something or other."

"Thank you," said Jack laughing. "You reading-men

can do your tea. I've seen you put away a potful of green in two hours."

"Ah! but tea doesn't do one any harm."

"I don't know that; it ruins the nerves."

"That's a question. At all events, spirits and beer play old Harry with the stomach," said Fabian Hall.

They walked along quickly, for it was cold, and inhaled the fresh, crisp evening air with pleasure.

Winter term was drawing to a close and soon they would all go home for the Christmas vacation.

The night was dark as pitch.

So dark, indeed, that they had considerable difficulty in keeping in the path, and at last chose the middle of the road.

They heard footsteps behind them.

"Some one is following us," said Jack. "I hate people walking behind me. Hold hard!"

They stopped.

The person behind continued to approach them, and by the faint light which was cast upon the scene by a distant gas-lamp, Jack endeavoured to make out his features.

In this attempt he was baffled.

They had proceeded a little distance beyond the turn-pike on the Iffley Road.

On one side of them were houses, on the other a hedge, beyond which were fields leading down to the river.

The person, whoever he was, did not cease walking quickly, and as he passed Jack, he gave him a rude push.

"What do you mean by that?" cried Jack.

The next moment something bright flashed in the air.

"Take care," cried Hall.

He gave Harkaway a violent push, and received the blade of a knife in his left side.

"I am stabbed," he said faintly.

"Help! help!" cried Jack, at the top of his voice.

"Curse it?" muttered the assassin. "It's the wrong man."

With these words on his lips, he took to his heels, jumped over the hedge, and was lost to sight.

Quick as were his movements, Jack perceived that the assassin had but one arm.

The man who struck the blow must be the one who had been talking to Kemp.

That the blow was meant for Jack there could be no doubt.

He had said distinctly in a tone of rage, that he had stabbed the wrong man.

Harkaway was to have been the victim.

Fabian Hall had generously thrown himself in the way of the assassin's knife.

It was a marvellous escape.

Jack continued to call loudly for help.

The inhabitants of the neighbouring houses were aroused, it being scarcely bedtime, as ten o'clock had not yet struck.

Several men came to the spot, bearing lanterns, and asked Jack a variety of questions.

He could only say that he was taking a walk with his friend, Mr. Hall of St. Aldate's, when they were set upon by a one-armed man, and without any provocation, his friend was stabbed.

Hall was lying in a pool of blood in the roadway, and breathing heavily.

"I will take him to my house," said a gentleman, from the opposite buildings. "Let some one run for the doctor."

The unfortunate young man was lifted up by sympathising hands, carried into a house, and laid upon a bed in a room on the ground floor.

The flow of blood was very great.

Jack trembled violently in every limb.

In spite of the cold air, drops of perspiration trickled down his face.

He had had a narrow escape of his life.

Who could his enemy be?

It was in vain that he asked himself the perplexing question.

That the assassin was a one-armed man there could be no doubt.

He had no enemy of that description except Hunston, but the chances were that Hunston was far, far away, even if he lived at all.

Every effort was made to stop the effusion of blood.

The arrival of the doctor was awaited with the utmost impatience by an ever-increasing crowd.

Such a thing as the murder of an undergraduate in the open street, at night, was a thing unheard of.

Was the motive robbery or revenge?

Jack had his own opinion, but he said nothing, deeming it more prudent to keep silence.

He fancied that Kemp was at the bottom of the outrage.

The murdering look of the fellow, when he left his room that morning, flashed across his recollection.

Fabian Hall seemed to be sinking fast.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PROCTOR IS PUZZLED.

For a week the life of Fabian Hall was in danger, but the excellent medical skill procured for him saved him.

As soon as possible, he was moved to his home, and it was thought that in about three months' time he would be able again to take up his residence at the university.

As may be imagined, the attempted assassination of an undergraduate created the wildest excitement in Oxford.

By some, the deed was set down to motives of robbery.

Every effort was made to discover the dastardly wretch, but without avail.

No one-armed man corresponding to the description given by Jack could be found.

In time the affair was forgotten by all but Jack who, knowing that his life had been attempted, was very cautious when he went out after dark.

He was of opinion that Kemp and Davis knew more about the outrage than they chose to tell.

Harvey agreed with him in this idea.

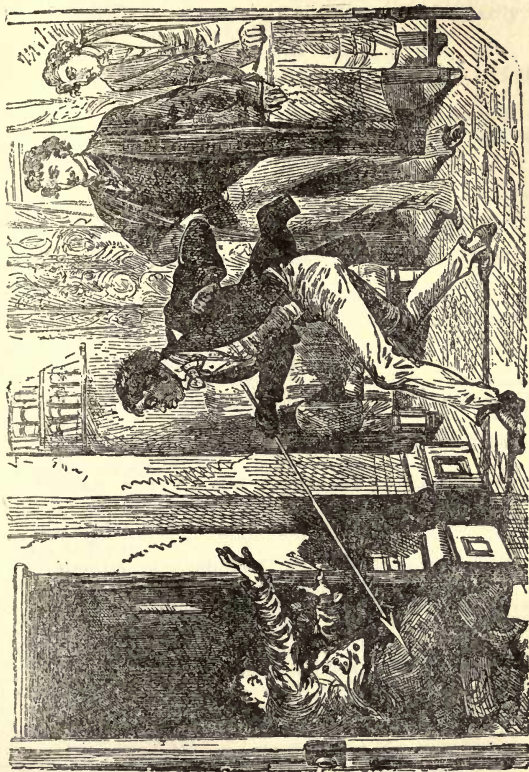
When they were talking the matter over Harvey said—

“It is my firm belief that Hunston has come back from the Malay seas, and that either Kemp or Davis, perhaps both of them, hired him to kill you.”

“Shouldn't wonder,” said Jack. “They are three villains, and they all hate me like steam.”

“I should carry a pistol if I were you.”

“They are not likely to make another attempt till the excitement this has caused has blown over.” said Jack.



“OH, MR. HARKAWAY, HE’LL MURDER ME!” CRIED BUSTER.”

"Let's have a stroll," said Harvey, yawning.

Lectures were over for that day, and not knowing what to do with themselves, they were smoking lazily.

"I'm very jolly," said Jack.

"You're getting beastly lazy. Come!"

As he spoke there was a noise in the passage, and the scout's voice was heard exclaiming—

"That's one for his nob; I've promised it him ever so long, and that's one for his conk, a regular corker; and that's been owing this three months!"

"What's the row?" asked Harvey.

"It's that infernal Buster and Monday," answered Jack; "at least, I expect so. They're always sparring."

"What a nuisance the fellows are."

The door opened, and Monday rushed in, followed by Buster.

The black's nose was bleeding freely, and it was evident that Buster had been showing him the mysteries of the noble art of self-defence.

"I say this won't do," cried Jack.

"Him hit um nose, sare," said Monday, "because I tell him what big thief he is. He got half um cold fowl in his pocket."

"You sneaking humbug, I'll pound you!" said Buster, squaring up again.

Monday rushed to the wall where Jack's Eastern trophies were hanging.

Taking down a long, cruel-looking spear, he made a rush at Buster.

"Monday have um life!" cried the black angrily.

He lunged dangerously at Buster with the spear.

The scout, thoroughly frightened, backed into a coal cupboard, and fell amongst the coals, under which he tried to burrow.

"Save me, sir! Oh, Mr. Harkaway, he'll murder me!" cried Buster.

"It's your own fault, you shouldn't have punched him," said Jack, enjoying the fun.

"Ha! nasty white man thief!" said Monday, brandishing the spear. "That's how we do it in Limbi."

He prodded the unfortunate scout in the leg.

"Ha!" he continued; "dirty English coward! How um like that?"

This was followed by another thrust with the spear.

"Oh, my!" screamed the scout. "He's been and stuck me in my seat of honour. Take him off, sir! Oh, Mr. Harkaway, save me from the wicious savage!"

"Get in amongst the nobbly ones," said Harvey.

"Call him off, sir!" continued Buster. "He ain't safe! I'll have the law of him, if I come out of this alive!"

"Me teach you to punch Monday's nose. Ugh! you English beast. How um like that and that?" cried Monday.

Each sentence was followed by a severe prick from the sharp-pointed spear.

Jack had been laughing till the tears ran down his cheeks.

"That'll do, Monday," he said. "I don't think he'll attack you any more, you've tackled him so well."

Monday hesitated to leave off.

"What!" cried Jack, "you won't obey orders, you mutinous dog? Put up that spear, or I'll know the reason why."

Monday slowly and reluctantly replaced the weapon.

"Me teach him," he grunted, "me teach dirty scout mans to hit me. Me King of Limbi. Me never have um nose punch before."

"Did it hurt?" asked Harvey.

"Yes, sare. Um nose tender part. Um not like to touch nose."

"Come out of those coals. You don't want to stop there all day, do you?" exclaimed Jack, approaching the cupboard.

"Is he quiet, sir?" asked Buster.

"Yes."

"Have you disarmed the savage monster?"

"Yes, I tell you. Come out."

Buster cautiously emerged from the place of concealment where he had found shelter.

His face and hands were grimed with coal dust, and he looked blacker than Monday.

He put his hand uneasily behind him now and again, as if he was in pain.

"You're a nice pair of beauties, I don't think. What am I to do with you?" asked Jack.

"Sack the nigger, sir," replied Buster.

"That is out of the question. I think a good deal more of Monday than I do of you or all the scouts in Oxford," replied Jack.

"That's where it is, sir, you make him more cheeky."

"Mast' Jack um gentlemen," said Monday. "What him care for white things like you?"

"Would you?" said Buster, clenching his fist and screwing up his lips angrily.

Monday flew towards the spear.

"Here, I say, none of that. Turn it up. I can't have these rows all over the shop," exclaimed Jack.

"Why him not let me alone, sare?" asked Monday.

"Shake hands and make friends."

"What!" replied Buster, scornfully. "I shake hands with a cannibal beast like that? Not me, sir."

"Make it up I tell you."

"Not me, sir. I respects myself too much. I can't abear cannibals. More especially since he's prodded me in three different places in the last new pair of breeches you was good enough to give me."

"Well, if you won't pal, you must get out of my room. Settle your rows outside. Do you hear? Clear out. Take your hook."

"I'll go to a magistrate, and ask if a decent Christian is to be prodded in the seat by a savage heathen," replied Buster.

"Make yourself scarce," roared Jack.

Buster slowly left the room, and was heard groaning and grumbling in the passage for some time afterwards.

During the rest of the day he bathed his wounds, and took sweet counsel with his friend Clinker.

"If I was you," said Clinker, "I'd poison the reptile."

"We'll chuck him in the river, that's what we'll do with him," replied Buster.

While they were talking, Monday washed his face, which Harvey said was a waste of time, as it never looked any cleaner.

Jack and Harvey walked out arm-in-arm, and did the High, with their gowns tucked up in undergraduate fashion.

They had discovered a very quiet and respectable hotel near the railway-station where there was a billiard-room.

Here they often passed an hour or two, either playing or watching others play, sometimes smoking and sometimes drinking the beer of the country, in the pewter of the period.

Their footsteps seemed naturally to lead them to the hotel.

They were careful to look round well before they entered, as the proctor and his bulldogs might be about.

The college authorities entertain a pious horror of public houses, and if Oxford men are found in them, they are visited by heavy pains and penalties.

"I shan't be able to stop long," said Jack.

"Why not?"

"I've promised Tom Carden to spin down in the St. Aldate's eight to Abingdon to-day."

"That's a stiffish pull. How are you getting on?"

"Stunningly," replied Jack. "The coxswain of the O. U. B. C. was good enough to compliment me yesterday on my satisfactory progress."

"Then it's settled you row in the 'varsity eight at Putney next year."

"Barring accidents," said Jack.

They entered the hotel, and nodding to the landlord went into the billiard-room.

A tall, loudly-dressed man was playing with the marker.

When he saw the university men come in, he exclaimed—

"I say, you fellows ought to look out for sharks."

"I beg your pardon," said Jack, "did you speak to me?"

"Yes; you or your friend."

"I am not in the habit of speaking to strangers," replied Jack, "and I don't know what you mean by sharks."

"Proctors, of course," answered the man. "My name is Gooch. Is that good enough for you?"

Jack sat down, and lighting his pipe, took no notice of him.

"You're civil, anyhow," said the man. "You university fellows are stuck up and no mistake. I wanted to be kind; the bulldogs have been in, and I don't think they are far off now."

Jack remained silent.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," Gooch went on, "I'll give you a game at billiards."

"You can't play," said Jack, looking up.

"Can't I? By Jove! I'll play you for a fiver, and post the money."

"I don't gamble."

"Say half-a-crown then, that won't break your bank."

"Very well, I'll play you for half-a-crown, fifty up, and give you forty-nine out of fifty; and I'll bet you won't have a stroke in the game if you give me the break," said Jack.

"What!" replied Gooch, "you make fifty at a break? Not you."

"I didn't say so," replied Jack. "All I say is that I'll play you fifty up for the table, and bet you half-a-crown that, if I have the break, you won't have a stroke in the game."

"Not have a stroke in the game," repeated Gooch thoughtfully; "and give me forty-nine out of fifty?"

"That's what I said."

"Very well, done with you. Fire away."

Jack took up a cue, chalked it, and placed his ball in balk.

He purposely made a miss.

"Forty-nine, love," said the marker. "A miss made; game to you, Mr. Gooch."

"I have won," said Gooch.

"Have you? I don't see it," replied Jack laughing. "You haven't had a stroke in the game."

"Oh," answered Gooch, with a grin.

"You've won the game, and I pay sixpence for the table, but I win my bet of half-a-crown that you shouldn't have a stroke in the game; therefore I make two bob. Half-crown. Thank you. Marker, take sixpence."

"Well," replied Gooch, looking rather foolish, "I've lost that. You can afford to stand drinks."

"Not I," said Jack.

"You've had me."

"I meant to," replied Jack. "How do you feel over it? Now you can go on with your game with the marker, and perhaps you won't be so very familiar with strangers next time."

Gooch looked very sulky. He put on his hat took up his stick, and walked to the door.

"Hullo!" he exclaimed, darting back, "the senior proctor, by Jove."

Jack and Harvey jumped up like lightning.

They looked at the window, but there was no escape.

"Get under the table, Dick," cried Jack.

"They'll see me there," said Harvey.

"No, they won't. I'll open the window, and say you got out that way."

"But you?"

"I'm all right. You'll see a lark with the proctor."

"What do you mean to do?"

"Leave that to me. Under you go, quick!" cried Jack.

Harvey crept under the table, and the next moment the proctor with his marshals entered the room.

"Your name and college, sir?" asked the proctor, with a severe expression.

"Harkaway, of St. Aldate's," replied Jack.

"I think I have seen you before."

"No, sir, never had the honour of an interview previously."

"Hum!" said the proctor. "Where is your companion?"

"My companion?"

"Yes: we saw two of you through the window."

"Ah, indeed," said Jack, "very negligent of the proprietor of this hotel not to put up blinds. I will remonstrate with him."

"But your friend, where is he? I demand an answer, sir."

"Got through the window, I think, sir," exclaimed Jack. "He was so frightened, when he heard you were coming, that he said he would take refuge in the sewer."

"The sewer! Nonsense. Did you say the sewer, Mr. Harkaway?"

"I did, sir," replied Jack.

"Dear me, that is odd," said the proctor, who was much puzzled.

Suddenly Jack imitated Harvey's voice and, using his wonderful power of ventriloquism, caused a sepulchral voice to issue from under the floor.

"Help, help!" cried the voice. "I have got into the sewer; the water is carrying me to the river. Help, help! I shall be drowned."

"God bless me! Foolish young man! what has he done?" said the proctor.

The bulldogs looked blankly at one another.

As for Jack he did not move a muscle of his face.

CHAPTER XVIII

IN THE SEWER.

HARVEY continued to lie like a log under the table, though he would have given the world to be able to laugh.

Knowing Jack's power and his liking for fun, he could guess what was coming.

Looking at Jack very gravely, the proctor exclaimed—"How did your friend get into the sewer?"

"That's more than I can tell you, sir, though I think there is a trap in the yard, which leads to it," replied Jack.

"What is to be done?"

"Call the police, sir. Do something for him. I expect the tide is carrying him down to the river. It is dreadful to think that that he may be stifled in the fetid waters."

"So it is. Speak to him and see where he is now."

Jack went down on his hands and knees, and shouted—"Harvey!"

There was no answer.

"He's gone, sir," cried Jack. "Come into the street; there is a grating there. He would be carried that way."

"Ah, yes, the street. We must get assistance. Perhaps with men and pickaxes we can yet save the foolish fellow," answered the proctor.

In a state of intense excitement, proctor, bulldogs, landlord, and every one connected with the establishment, ran into the street.

"For Heaven's sake! save me! I can't hold on much longer," cried a voice beneath their feet.

"There he is. Thank God! he lives," exclaimed the proctor.

"Get pickaxes," cried the landlord. "I'll give five pounds out of my own pocket to the man who saves him."

"And I will give twenty," said the proctor.

"Get pickaxes! Get pickaxes!" cried the crowd, which increased rapidly every moment.

"What is it?" asked one of another.

"The proctor was after a 'varsity man," answered Jack in a whisper; "and to avoid him, he crept into the sewer and can't get back again."

This information flew from one to another.

The proctor and his attendants were never very popular, either with the towns people or the undergraduates.

A thrill of horror ran through the crowd.

"Cries of "Shame!" arose

Seeing he had stimulated the spectators to the proper point, Jack leant over a narrow grating.

"I hear him," he said; "he is holding on to part of the brickwork. How the water is rushing towards the river. Save, oh! save my friend!"

"We will—we will, or perish in the attempt," answered several men who had arrived with picks and spades.

They began with considerable energy to break up the street.

At intervals, faint moans and shrieks seemed to come out of the bowels of the earth.

"Work away, my men, work away," said the proctor.

In a short time, a deep hole was made in the road.

It seemed as if they were coming to the drowning man now.

"Are you alive still?" asked Jack.

"Yes, but I am sinking fast," replied the voice.

"Hear that? He's sinking!" exclaimed a man in the crowd. "I say it's a burning shame that these proctors should kill men in this way."

"Let's stone them," remarked another.

The attitude of the crowd became threatening.

"Do nothing rashly," exclaimed Jack. "Our first duty is to rescue Mr. Harvey of St. Aldate's who is in the sewer."

Suddenly the voice below said—

"I am going! I can hold on no longer. Save me! Oh, help, help!"

"He's gone," said Jack. "Go to the river. We may catch him at the mouth of the sewer."

There was a rush down the street to the bridge at the top of Castle Street, where the sewer emptied itself into the river.

A dozen strong men threw themselves into the river.

Suddenly a voice rang out on the opposite bank.

"Sold again," it said. "I've done you this time, sir. I've got out, and I'm off to college."

"What's the meaning of this?" asked the proctor, looking round angrily.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the voice, disappearing in the distance.

The people seemed pleased to think that the undergraduate had escaped.

"Never mind, sir," observed one of the bulldogs. "We've got their names."

"Where's Mr. Harkaway?" asked the proctor.

Jack had disappeared in the confusion.

"Bonnet 'em!" said a rough.

"They ain't got no hats, only flat caps," said another.

Hustled and hustled and pushed about the proctor and his satellites were glad to make their escape.

While the crowd were dispersing and talking over the wonderful occurrence Jack hastened back to the hotel.

Harvey was liquoring up at the bar.

The landlord had just returned, and was astonished to see Harvey.

"How did you do it?" he asked.

"Harkaway's a ventriloquist. Hold your noise," replied Harvey.

"Keep it quiet," said Jack. "We can have many a spree this winter."

"It's a lick to me how you do it," said the landlord.

"I thought he was in the sewer."

"Of course you did."

"But if I'd stopped to think, I might have known there was no entrance to it in my back yard."

"That's the beauty of it," returned Jack. "People don't stop to think."

"Suppose we have a bottle of fiz after that?" remarked Harvey.

"I'm agreeable," replied Jack.

"Do you think the proctor will say anything to us?" asked Harvey.

"No, I don't. We shall be let off this time. He doesn't know whether he's been made a fool of or not," replied Jack.

They had the wine, and went back to college, chuckling over the adventure.

Jack was right for once ; the proctor did not send them, and the affair was passed over.

While Jack was putting on his flannels to go for the row to Abingdon, his scout brought in a letter.

He hastily tore it open.

"It's from home. Excuse me, Dick, will you, while I read it?" said he.

Harvey nodded.

Presently Jack exclaimed—

"Emily has arrived from Paris, and after the Christmas vacation she is to take the position of a governess a little way out of Oxford."

"Won't that be jolly?"

"Awfully. I should like to have her near us ; and here's an invitation for you to come and spend a fortnight with us."

"Your governor's a trump," said Harvey.

"Will you come?"

"Will a duck swim? Of course I will."

"That's settled then," said Jack. "We'll have some skating ; it will be rare fun."

"There's one thing you will have to look out for, Jack," replied Harvey, thoughtfully.

"What's that?"

"You mustn't let Emily see you walking out with Miss Hilda Manasses."

"What can I do? I must keep in with the old Jew, and I'll tell you why in confidence. I never have told you before, but I will now."

In a few words Jack informed him how he had been robbed by Kemp, and that he owed the Jew a thousand pounds.

"That's bad. I had no idea you were in such a fix," replied Harvey ; "and I never felt the want of money so much in my life before."

"Why?"

"Because if I had it I'd give it to you."

The tears came to Jack's eyes as he grasped his friend by the hand.

"I know you would let me have it," he said ; "but we must try and do without it."

Soon after he hastened down to the river, and took his place in the eight.

She went along at a rattling pace, with a good way on her, and the captain was well satisfied with his crew.

The next day, while walking in the Christ-Church meadows, he met Hilda.

She blushed at seeing him, and he politely offered her his arm.

"No, thank you. I would rather walk alone," she answered.

They walked up and down the broad walk side by side, talking about indifferent subjects.

It was clear from the way in which the girl changed colour now and again, that there was more on her side than a feeling of friendship for him.

But Jack never thought of love in connection with her.

His heart was given to Emily.

Perhaps if he had never seen Emily he might have loved Hilda.

The Jewish maiden was, strictly speaking, more beautiful than Emily.

"You so seldom come and see me now, Mr. Harkaway," she said, in a tone of gentle reproach.

"I am in training," he replied. "That keeps me very quiet."

"I should like to see you row at Putney. I have always heard it is a grand race."

"Get your father to take you to town for a few days," suggested Jack.

"Oh! you don't know papa," she answered. "I don't think anything would induce him to leave Oxford. It is so long since I had a change I can scarcely remember it."

All at once a cheery voice exclaimed—

"Hullo, Jack! are you so deeply engaged that you don't recognise old friends?"

Jack looked up, and saw Mr. Bedington and, to his consternation, Emily was hanging on his arm.

She was deadly pale.

Jack had been talking almost affectionately to Hilda, and Emily's surprise at seeing him with a handsome, well-dressed girl was unbounded.

"How do you do, father?" he exclaimed in some confusion. "Why did you not say you were coming?"

At the same time he held out his hand to Emily.

"This is indeed a pleasure," continued Jack.

She did not seem to see his proffered hand, and returned his salutation very coldly.

"We thought we would take you by surprise," exclaimed Mr. Bedington. "Emily and I have come up about her situation. She will be a governess, you know, and so we looked you up. Your scout told me you had gone for a walk, so we ordered tea at five in your room, and came out to look for you."

"Cool of you," said Jack, laughing. "But I will do all that a poor friendless bachelor can to make you comfortable."

"You have not introduced me to your friend," continued Mr. Bedington.

"Oh! excuse me, will you? Miss Hilda Manasses—my father and Emily," replied Jack, still more confused.

Hilda and Emily glanced at one another like two enraged tigresses.

Their woman's instinct told them that they both loved the same man.

"I must go home now," exclaimed Hilda. "Papa will be expecting me."

"Oh, don't go," said Jack.

"Pray don't let me drive you away," cried Mr. Bedington.

"Thank you very much," returned Hilda. "I really must run away. Good-bye, Mr. Harkaway. May we expect you soon?"

She darted an unkind glance at Emily as she spoke.

"Yes, I think so. I will try to spare an evening shortly," answered Jack.

"Don't make a favour of it, please," said Hilda. "I can't bear being patronised."

"I didn't mean it in that way."

"Never mind; I'll forgive you this once. You university men read so much and see so little society, poor fellows, that you have an awkward way of expressing yourselves, isn't that it?"

"Very possibly," answered Jack.

Hilda nodded, and tripped quickly away under the trees, Jack lifting his mortar-board as she did so.

"Pretty girl that," said Mr. Bedington, "though her name has an Israelitish sound."

"She is a Jewess," replied Jack.

"I thought so. Let us hope you have not been currying favour with the daughter in order to borrow money from the Jew?"

Mr. Bedington looked Jack through and through with his clear, bright eyes.

Jack's gaze fell before this searching stare.

"Oh, no," he replied. "Thanks to your liberality, sir, I am in no want of money."

It was the first falsehood that he had ever told Mr. Bedington, and the hot, tell-tale blood mantled his face, and made it burn, so that he turned away.

"Come," continued Mr. Bedington, "our time is short. We return to-night. Show us some of the lions of Oxford."

Jack led the way to the river, and Emily walked silently by his side, thinking of the beauty of Hilda, the Jew's daughter.

CHAPTER XIX.

KEMP'S NEW PLOT.

WHEN Jack had shown Emily and Mr. Bedington as much as he could in a short time, they found themselves near the Radcliffe Library on their way to his rooms.

"You should see the library by moonlight," he exclaimed; "that's the time."

He addressed the remark to Emily, who took no notice of him.

It was a relief when they went into St. Aldate's.

Monday and Buster had made up their differences for a time, and began to bow and scrape as the little party entered.

"How um do, Missey Em'ly?" exclaimed Monday.

"No find um Pisangs here."

"Thank goodness, no, Monday," replied Emily, smiling for the first time.

She shook him by the hand, to the intense disgust of Buster, who afterwards told Clinker in confidence that he couldn't imagine how a lady could speak civilly to a black thief like that.

After tea Harvey and Tom Carden dropped in.

This was a great relief to Jack, for Carden and Mr. Bedington began to talk upon boating matters, in which conversation Harvey joined, thus giving him an opportunity of speaking privately to Emily.

She sat down near a window, and was looking out in a dreamy sort of manner at the quad.

"Emily, dearest," said Jack.

"Well?" she answered shortly.

"You are angry with me."

"Have I not cause to be?" she replied.

"You will break my heart, if you do not listen to me."

"What have you to say?" Emily exclaimed, turning her sad blue eyes upon him.

"You are jealous of Hilda."

"Who is Hilda?"

"Miss Manasses. I mean the girl you met me with," replied Jack, struggling boldly with the difficulty.

"Since we are engaged," she answered, "you cannot wonder at my feeling hurt."

"But there is nothing in it."

"I don't know anything about it. All I do know is that you thought me miles away in France, and during my absence you go walking about with a big, tall creature, who I am sure is not the least bit pretty, but only overgrown and horridly fast."

"I met her by accident—will you believe me?"

"Of course I will, but you must have met before, or else you are a bad, bold man to speak to a girl you don't know, and she is something worse to answer you."

"Her father does bills."

"What may that be?"

"Why, he gives you money on your note of hand, and I wanted a little accommodation, that's all," said Jack.

"That is no reason why you should be civil to his daughter, is it?"

"Well, no, not exactly," said Jack, stupidly.

"Promise me, Jack, that you will never—never speak to her again, and I'll forgive you," exclaimed Emily, brightening up.

"With pleasure. The girl is nothing to me, and I had no more idea than a baby that I should meet her to-day."

He raised her hand to his lips and kissed it.

"There now, Emmy dear, we are friends, are we not?" he added.

"Yes," she replied. "You never deceived me yet, Jack, darling, and I will not believe that the atmosphere of Oxford has so far corrupted you as to make you base."

"It never shall. I only love you in the world."

"And I—do I not love you?" she asked.

"I'd lay my life on it, Emmy, dear," he answered.

"Don't fret any more, there's a pet."

Jack and Emily got quite friendly again, and he was sorry when they had to go.

Mr. Bedington slipped a ten-pound note into his hand and told him to make the best use of his time, and then Jack saw them off at the station.

He returned to his rooms rather thoughtful, thinking one moment of Emily, the next of Hilda, and after that of the old Jew, wondering what he would do about the bill.

As he was crossing the quad, a tall, handsome man, rather poorly though neatly dressed, stopped him.

"Mr. Harkaway, I think?" he said.

"Yes," replied Jack.

"My name is Franklin," continued the stranger.

"Are you a St. Aldate's man? I think I know your face, but I am not sure."

"I am one of the servitors of the college," replied Franklin. "Perhaps you do not know what that is," he added, with a sad smile.

"Not exactly," answered Jack.

"I can soon explain. My father is poor, and unable to allow me more than eighty pounds a year, so I could not come up to college as you did. I was obliged to enter as a servitor, which cuts down the fees."

"Oh, I know," replied Jack, "you mark the names in chapel and do things in hall. Well, my dear fellow, you are none the worse for that."

"I hope not. It is not money that makes the gentleman," replied Franklin, proudly; "but I want to speak to you privately, if you will not think me intrusive."

"Not in the least. Come to my rooms, will you?"

Franklin followed him to his rooms, and Jack, giving him an arm-chair, stirred the fire, brought out whisky, and made some grog.

"Now you are at home, I hope," he said.

"Thank you, I am going to light my pipe, and then the mind of man can desire no more. Are you aware you have two enemies in this college?"

"I know it very well. You mean Kemp and Davis," replied Jack.

"Those are the two men."

"What are they doing now? Anything new?"

"The fact is," said Franklin, "I have picked up an anonymous letter which fell out of Mr. Kemp's pocket at hall."

"Is it in Kemp's writing?"

"I fancy so, though it is disguised. My first impulse was to give it him back again, but as I approached for that purpose I heard Kemp say to Davis, 'I have written the letter, and you may depend upon it, that Harkaway shall not row in the eight at Putney.'"

"How can they stop me?" asked Jack.

"That is a mystery at present," replied Franklin.

"Well, hearing this remark, I resolved to read the letter. There is nothing dishonourable in that I hope."

"I don't think so. You had your suspicions, you see."

"That's the way I argued."

"What is the letter about?"

"It is written by a sincere friend to Moses Manasses, the Jew money-lender, telling him that you are engaged to be married to a Miss Emily Scratchley, who has been to see you to-day."

"That's true enough."

"And it goes on to say that you are only making a fool of Miss Hilda Manasses, for the basest purpose of which a man of honour can be accused."

"The villains!" exclaimed Jack. "I have never said a word to Hilda that could lead her to think I was fond of her."

"You know best of course. If I might presume to give you advice."

"Pray do."

"You won't think it impertinent on the part of a mere stranger."

"Not at all. I shall esteem it a favour, my dear fellow," said Jack.

"Then I should recommend you to cut the girl's ac-

quaintance altogether. If you don't care for her, you may make her care for you."

"I never thought of that," said Jack; "though really I am not to blame in this matter. I owe the Jew money, and so I kept in with him and his daughter, because I thought he would be more likely to hold over, if I were civil to them."

"Ah!" said Franklin, with a grave shake of the head, "it is an awful thing for a young man to owe money. Poor as I am, and wanting money to buy books even, I don't think I would accept any tin, if a fellow was to offer to lend it me without interest."

"Wouldn't you really?" said Jack.

"No; I have seen so many fellows, since I have been up here, ruined by getting into the fast set, which means getting into debt."

"It wasn't my fault altogether. It was a gambling debt, contracted with this very man, Kemp, and I didn't know what I was about at the time."

"Kemp and men like him are a disgrace to the university," said Franklin, indignantly.

"Just give me the letter to look at, will you?" said Jack.

It was handed to him, and he read it attentively.

"The object of this is to make Manasses angry, and induce him to come down upon me for the bill," he said.

"Can you pay the money?"

"Impossible."

"Would your failure to do so interfere with your chance of rowing in the Oxford eight at Putney?" asked Franklin.

"I really don't know. How does the law stand?" replied Jack.

"I think I can tell you, for I have been coaching up law for a legal exam. lately."

"There is no imprisonment for debt," said Jack.

"I beg your pardon, there is. Has the Jew got a judgment against you?"

"He has served me with a writ."

"Then he has his judgment if you did not defend the action. Well, I will tell you what he will do, if he is inclined to be nasty."

"What?" asked Jack, much interested.

"He will summon you before a judge in chambers, to show cause why you should not pay the money, or, in default, be committed to prison for six weeks."

"Can he do that?"

"Undoubtedly. You or your friends are in a position to pay, therefore the result of such an application would be your committal."

"That's pleasant," said Jack.

"If you were put in prison, it would spoil your training; and perhaps prevent you from rowing at all, if you were arrested and locked up just before the race."

"Do you think that is Kemp's plot?" asked Jack.

"He said you should not row, and he's trying to enrage the Jew against you. That's how the case stands."

"Thank you very much for your kindness in telling me all this," said Jack.

"I wish you well out of it," said Franklin; "and now I must go and do some ancient history. I am a poor man, Mr. Harkaway, and have to work when you swells are asleep or at wine-parties."

"I've cut the wines and the suppers, now I am in training," said Jack; "in fact, I hate them. There is something awfully unreal about all that dissipation."

"You've got the remedy in your own hands," remarked Franklin.

"How?"

"You needn't go to them, you know," replied Franklin with a smile, rising as he spoke.

"Sorry you must go. Some night I shall think it such a privilege, Mr. Franklin, if I might come to your rooms and read a little with you. I am doing the 'Knights of Aristophanes,' now, and I am not quite clear about certain passages."

"You will find me a queer, solitary sort of friend, I am afraid. I have had so many snubs since I have been up here, that I keep myself very much to myself, and it was a hard struggle with me to stop you to-night in the quad."

"But may I come?" asked Jack, rather anxiously.

"If you will take your chance of finding me in a good temper, and put up with my ways. My den is poor, you might call it poverty-stricken; I don't want to shock your fine idea of what rooms ought to be," said Franklin,

looking round curiously at Jack's sumptuously-furnished apartments.

"I shall come, and take my chance of being turned out," said Jack, smiling.

Franklin smiled too, and wished him good-night.

Jack saw him to the door, and sat down, feeling very miserable.

Dark clouds were blowing up once more, and he felt satisfied that there was danger ahead.

What shape the peril would take he could scarcely tell, but he was uneasy and nervous.

CHAPTER XX.

JACK IS ASKED HIS INTENTIONS.

Not feeling in a sleepy humour, Jack determined to go up to Sir Sydney Dawson's rooms.

Sir Sydney generally had company.

He had been away for a week, and only returned that afternoon.

As he expected, Jack found him in, with three or four friends.

"How do?" said Jack. "Got back, I see."

"That is a self-evident proposition," replied Sir Sydney.

"I have had a week in the little village they call London."

"It don't seem to have done you any good. You're awfully fishy about the eyes."

"When a man hasn't had any decent sleep for six or seven days, and been knocking about at theatres and other cribs, a piscatorial look about the optics is the natural result. Thanks for your visit all the same, you old croaker."

"I wasn't sure you would be in, as you didn't turn up in hall."

"I'd no appetite for roast or boiled," replied Dawson, "so I went over to the 'Mitre,' and got a broil."

"Good thing, too, when there's enough of it."

"Now you are here, you will have to pay the penalty."

"What's that?" asked Jack.

"We were just thinking about brewing a bowl of bishop, and having a hand at Van John. You'll play Van."

"I can't stop late. I'm in training."

"Hang training!" replied Dawson.

"It would do you a world of good, old man, if you were to pull in the boat," said Jack.

"Not if I know it, Harkaway, my innocent. Catch me living on a quart of beer a day and pulling my twenty miles, coming back sore and strained and awfully baked. That's not this child's form by a long way."

"You're a sybarite."

"Who's he?"

"Get your classical dictionary and turn to the S's, you ignorant and likewise lazy beggar."

"How's Billingsgate?" cried Sir Sydney. "Where do you expect to die when you go to? I mean—put it t'other way, and then you'll know what I do mean. It's too much trouble to explain."

Jack laughed.

"Don't stand there grinning," continued Sir Sydney. "You remind me of nothing so much as a donkey struck by lightning. Get the cards out."

Jack looked round and saw that among Dawson's guests was the Duke of Woodstock.

"How do?" he exclaimed, as he passed him to get the card-box from a side table.

"Quite well—aw—thanks," replied the duke. "Been widing—aw—any maw steeple-chases, Mr. Harkaway?"

"Not lately," replied Jack. "It's not exactly my line. I'm more at home on the water."

"Aw—wataw—don't know much about wataw, except in conjunction with something else—aw—say alcohol."

"Good word that," remarked Dawson.

"Yaas; flattaw myself alcohol is—aw—a big word," replied the duke.

"Tell you what," said Jack, "I should like to handicap you and Woodstock for a mile race. I don't think either of you would run the distance under an hour."

"Hark at the muscular Christian," said Sir Sydney. "We, my dear boy, do not think athletics the highest point worthy of a man's ambition."

"No," replied Jack, "drinking, smoking, or something worse is your form."

"I say," cried Sir Sydney, "where are you getting to? We shall have to sit on you and let off some of that steam."

The cards were produced, and Jack limited himself to one hour.

He won a few pounds and got up.

"Look at the rat," said Sir Sydney; "he's made a couple of boxes of weeds out of us, and now he's going to slope."

"Mean beggar," remarked the duke.

"I told you I should only play one hour," replied Jack.

"Be off with the swag. Take your booty. What is filthy lucre to us? Vanish into the night," replied Sir Sydney.

Jack strode off and was soon in bed, but it was daylight before the roysterers sought the sheets, with bleared eyes and confused ideas of things in general.

Christmas approached, and the vacation commenced.

Jack went home without hearing anything from Moses Manasses.

He did not call upon the Jew, on the principle that it was best to let a sleeping dog lie still.

His first term at Oxford had, on the whole, been very pleasant.

The winter was a mild one.

There was no skating, and he spent his time in driving or walking with Emily or in shooting with Harvey and his father.

When term commenced again he went back to Oxford, more than ever in love with Emily, who was no longer jealous of Hilda.

Emily had heard all about the bill transaction from him, and promised to say nothing about it, though she advised him to tell Mr. Bedington.

This he would not listen to.

He thought he should get out of the scrape somehow, and the amount was so large that he was afraid of making a clean breast of it.

As the weather was so mild, boating went on without interruption.

Jack's magnificent rowing obtained him great praise from everybody.

It was said that there was not a finer oar in the 'varsity eight than he.

The Cambridge crew, from all reports, was an unusually good one.

Therefore, it was more than ever necessary that Oxford should put her best men in the boat.

Jack had not been up more than a fortnight, when he one day received a visit from Mr. Moses Manasses.

He was a little embarrassed when he saw the Jew, but, putting a good face on it, he begged him to be seated, and said he was glad to see him.

"You have not called on us lately, Mr. Harkaway," said the Jew.

"Well, no," replied Jack. "You see, I have been so busy."

"I presume your intentions to my daughter are the same? S'help me, Mr. Harkaway, the girl is very fond of you," continued Moses.

"I'm sorry for that," Jack answered, boldly, "because I am engaged already."

"Ha!" said the Jew. "To whom?"

"An orphan, without any money; there is disinterestedness for you."

"But Hilda will be rich. I can give her fifty—a hundred—two hundred thousand pounds," cried the Jew.

Jack thought money-lending at Oxford must be a profitable business.

"He'll be a lucky man who gets her," he observed.

"Why should you not be the one?"

"Simply because I'm bottled up already."

"And you tell me, sir, that you never meant to marry my daughter?" screamed the Jew.

"Never."

"Why did you turn over her music while she sang to you?—why walk out with her?—why come to my house?"

"I did not mean any harm."

"You call yourself a shentleman?" exclaimed the Jew, growing more and more excited. "Why, I could make a better shentlemans out of a turnip. You are no shentleman; you are a villain, Mr. Harkaway!"

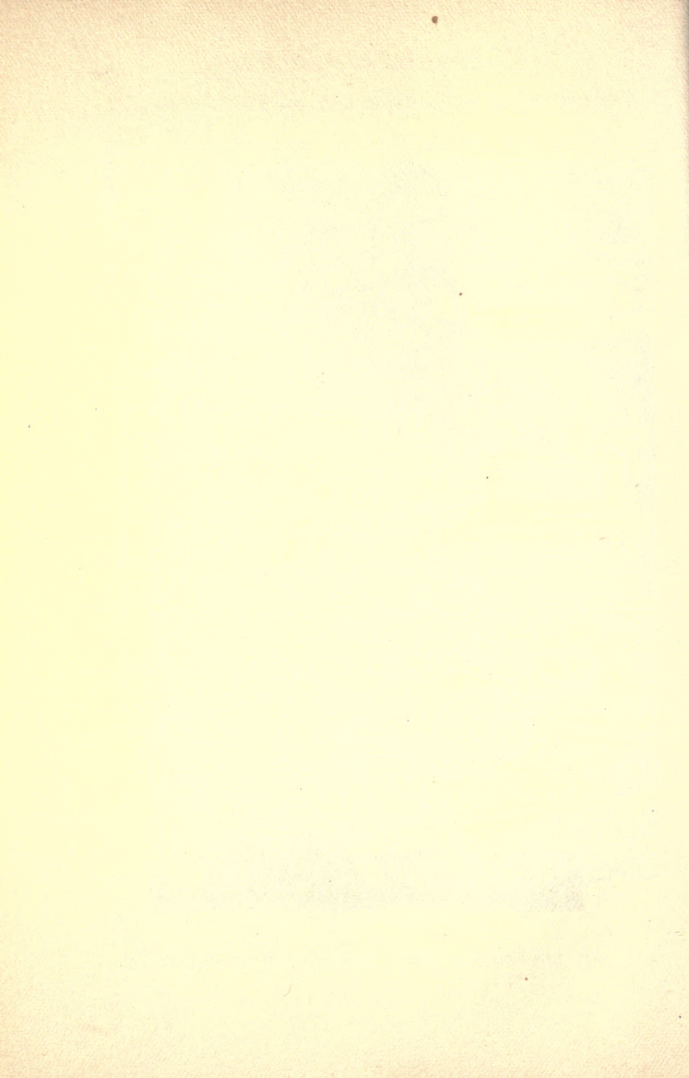
Jack coloured up.

"I tell you so to your face. Why should you try to



“ ‘ I ADMIT I MADE HER PRESENTS,’ SAID JACK.”

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dishonour me and break a poor girl's heart? Answer me that," continued the Jew.

"I don't think I deserve this language, Mr. Manasses," exclaimed Jack.

"Yes, you do. Have you not behaved like a paltry humbug?—after my kindness too! Why should a Christian bring dishonour on a Jew? Is not the Jewish maiden fair and virtuous? Did she——"

"I cannot allow you to talk to me like this," exclaimed Jack, getting angry, and walking about the rooms with his hands in his pockets.

"Have I said too much?"

"A deuced sight too much; more than I mean to stand anyhow, and I will thank you to leave my rooms, and not come into them again until you know how to behave yourself."

"Will you give me my monish!" asked Manasses.

"You know very well I can't because I haven't got it."

"The law will give it me, or punish you," said Manasses.

"Go to law then; I don't care," replied Jack, desperately. "Only get out of my sight, that's all."

"But my girl—what shall I say to Hilda?"

"How can I tell you what to say? I have never led her to believe that I loved her."

"Did you not give her this present, and this, and this?" asked Manasses, drawing from his capacious pocket a bracelet, a ring, and an ivory-handled fan.

"Yes; I admit I made her presents thoughtlessly. You were very kind to me."

"Is that all you have to say?"

"That is all," answered Jack.

"Father Abraham!" exclaimed the Jew, holding up his hands. "I lend my money; I do not press him; he creeps into my house like a viper, and he stings me through my daughter."

"Tell Miss Manasses that I am very sorry she should have run away with any mistaken ideas about my intentions. I always regarded her as a friend. That is all."

"All!" repeated the Jew. "Holy Moses! this is the honour of an Oxford shentleman!"

"Look here," said Jack, "you're extremely insulting

and troublesome. Get out of my place. I tell you I have done nothing wrong ; be off."

"I could ruin him," said the Jew, as if talking to himself.

"I can't help that."

"I could make him a bankrupt, or put him in prison, and his friends would send him abroad. His future is in my hands."

"I'll pay you some day, you old vampiring vulture," cried Jack, whose patience was nearly exhausted.

"Ah ! he might have my cherished one, my ewe lamb, the flower of the flock, and be rich and respected, and get into parliament, and have his castle and yacht, and live like a real shentleman. Ah ! if he would arise like Barak, that son of Abinoam !"

"I say, cut it," replied Jack, who was getting tired of it. "I'm very sorry for the young lady, but it isn't my fault."

The Jew rose, and walked shakily, with the aid of his stick, to the door.

"I'll have my monies," he muttered. "It is my right. The law will give me my gold."

Jack was very miserable, and came to the conclusion he was in a mess it would be difficult to get out of.

Once he was very nearly writing to his father, and confessing everything, but he clung to a hope that he might extricate himself.

While he was sitting perplexed and worried, Sir Sydney Dawson and the Duke of Woodstock came in.

"Ah ! my noble swells," he exclaimed, trying to be cheerful. "What does this visit portend ?"

"Give us to drink, and we will unfold the plan of our conspiracy," replied Sir Sidney, striking a theatrical attitude.

Jack touched a hand-bell to summon Monday, who was generally in waiting in another room.

"What ho ! within there, slave !" cried Sir Sydney.

Monday made his appearance, grinning.

"Bring out the glorious vintage of champagne, and forget not the glasses."

Presently two bottles of Moët's No. 1 were placed on the table, the corks popped, and the wine bubbled up in the tumblers.

"Das ist gut as my friend Bismarck would observe," said Sir Sydney Dawson, emptying his glass.

"Perhaps you will be good enough to translate your German," replied Jack.

"Das—this ; ist—is ; gut—good. Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest. We have got a bet on, Harkaway, and you must be the umpire."

"What is it?"

"Let Woodstock tell you ; he started the idea."

"Now, my lord duke, I'm all attention," said Jack.

"Fact is—aw—I had an ideaw," replied the duke.

"That is an event of such very rare occurrence, that his grace will be obliged if you will make a note of it, Harkaway," exclaimed Sir Sydney, laughing.

"Don't intawupt me," said Woodstock. "Fact is, Mr. Harkaway, we saw two organs playing in the High. Two of those—aw—infernal bawal organ things."

"Yes."

"Waal, we sent a scout for them, and they are at pwesent gorging themselves in my woom—aw."

"What, the organs?" said Jack.

"No, the men ; what I mean is, the pwopwietors, and we have—aw—hired the organs."

"What for?"

"Aw—that is the ideaw. Yaas, I flattaw myself the ideaw is to land the organs."

"But what are you going to do with them?" asked Jack.

"It's a bet, you know. Dawson is to take one organ—aw—and I am to have the othaw. Twig?"

"Not quite."

"Aw—some people vewy dense, but I will explain. Dawson is to start playing—aw—from the Martyr's Memorial, and I start from the High Stweet. See?"

"No. I'm rather in a fog still."

"Deaw me," exclaimed his grace. "It's as cleaw as a glass of bittaw beaw."

"I'll tell you all about it," cried Dawson. "I've bet that I will play in the Corn Market for an hour on one organ, and Woodstock is going to play on the other, and I back myself to get more halfpence than he does."

"Yaas, that's the bet, who gets the most coppaws," drawled the duke."

"What a lark," said Jack. "I should like to be in that."

"Are you in the humour for a spree?" asked Sir Sydney.

"Rather; I'm game for anything to-day—from pitch-and-toss to manslaughter. I've been most awfully upset."

"Look here," exclaimed Sir Sydney, seeing Jack's monkey on the back of a chair. "Take the bishop on your arm, dress him in an old cap and gown, and put a placard on his nut, saying he is the illegitimate son of the Dean of St. Aldate's, and being in distress, would gladly receive the contributions of the charitable."

"That would be going too far, wouldn't it? Suppose I say he is the only son of the Emperor of Peru?"

Dawson took a pen and a piece of paper, on which he wrote—

"Out of work. I am the nearest relation of the Dean of St. Aldate's. Any trifle will be thankfully received and acknowledged in the newspapers. The highest testimonials from Mr. Darwin and others can be seen at Uji. This is a case highly recommended by Dr. Livingstone. Out of work. Bestow a trifle on a poor monkey, who, after all, is a man and a brother. Owing to the strikes and the high price of coal, I am starving. Please part a penny, kind Christian friends."

"There!" he exclaimed, reading the effusion; "and if that don't draw the coin, I'm mistaken."

"What's your bet?" asked Jack.

"A fiver."

"Well, I'll bet a fiver that I, with the monkey, take more than either of you in the Corn Market in one hour."

"Done," cried Sir Sydney and the duke in a breath.

"As for me—aw," said the duke, "it will be some coppaws or a policeman in no time, for I mean to—aw—sing 'Annie Laurie' to the—aw—inspiring tunes of my organ."

"Mine's a regular ear-cracker," exclaimed Sir Sydney. "I'm safe to cop largely."

"How about the togs?" asked Jack.

"Oh, Buster has gone to get some old clothes and caps of his."

"I see. That will do. Suppose I take Monday with me, half-naked and barefoot, and say he's the King of the Cannibal Islands."

"No, that won't be fair," replied Sir Sydney; "the

black would be sure to draw. You've got the monk, that's enough."

"Naw," said the duke gravely, "niggaws aren't fair. Don't mind monkeys, but must draw the line at—aw—niggaws."

Taking the monkey in his arms, Jack put an old cap on him, and a gown which he cut short.

Then the three men, flushed with wine, went to Dawson's rooms, where Buster was waiting with the old clothes.

"Haven't those fellows done eating?" asked Sir Sydney, pointing to the Italians.

"No, sir," replied Buster; "they've been at it this hour, and they ain't done yet. I should back the little one, sir."

"To eat the most?"

"Yes, sir; he's only a chicken and two cutlets behind the tall one, and he's coming up fast."

"Let them alone and help us to put on the duds," said Sir Sydney.

They were quickly attired in dilapidated garments, which effectually disguised them.

"Are you ready?" asked Jack.

"Yaas," replied the duke. "Heaw, give me—aw—a crooked pin to hold up my ragged breeches."

"How do I look?" said Sir Sydney, surveying himself in the glass.

"Whitechapel all over, sir," answered Buster, with a grin.

"And I?" asked the duke.

"Reg'lar chickaleary cove, your grace."

"Where are the instruments of torture?"

"Organs, sir?"

"Yes!"

"Mr. Clinker's minding them outside the gate, sir."

"Come on, all of you. Mind the monkey, Harkaway. It's now four by my watch; at five sharp we meet here again," said Dawson.

"In your rooms?"

"Yes, here."

"All right. Cut along," exclaimed Jack.

The three young men stole through the quad, looking like beggars, and reached the street without attracting special notice, as the porter was in the secret.

"If they don't get locked up, it's a mussy," muttered Buster. "They're on for a spree this time, and I know how sprees husually hend."

His eye fell upon the Italians.

CHAPTER XXI.

MR. MOLE MAKES A STRANGE PURCHASE.

THE Italians were still silently eating and having polished off the poultry and such like trifles, they were beginning to attack a sirloin of beef.

"Lor'," observed Buster, "it's a caution to see them men eat. Perfect gorgers, hi call them, and no flies. I hope they won't bust up or have a fit."

Sir Sydney wiped his face with the sleeve of his coat, which was not too clean, and the others followed his example, to make their faces dirty.

Then he slung the organ over his back by the strap, the Duke of Woodstock doing the same.

"Wish you luck, gentlemen," said Clinker, with a broad grin.

"Be here in an hour to take the organs."

"Take the orgins? Yes, sir," replied the scout.

"They started up St. Aldate's Street for the High, Jack following with the grotesquely-dressed monkey, who had the placard pinned on his academical cap.

"Oh, my!" said the scout to himself, "they'll wake 'em up before they've done, or I'll eat my hat, and my hat ain't a rump-steak by no manner of means."

It was not long before the strains of the rival organs were heard in different directions.

Sir Sydney Dawson enlivened the neighbourhood of St. John's, while the Duke of Woodstock made melody near St. Mary's Church.

As for Jack, he went with his monkey on his arm in front of the "Clarendon Hotel," and, standing still, waited for the crowd to assemble.

This the Oxonians were not long in doing, for the academic costume of the ape was enough to provoke mirth in the most melancholy.

Holding out his hand, Jack said, in a whining voice—

"Give, please ; give to *poor* Italiano, signor. Please one penny give."

In a short time he collected nearly two shillings, and began to think he was doing a roaring trade.

"I shall lick those other fellows into fits," he muttered. "This monkey dodge isn't half a bad game. I shall know what to do if I ever get hard up."

Some gentlemen had been dining at the hotel, and looking out of the window, they threw some coppers to the monkey, who picked them up and gave them to his master.

To Jack's astonishment, the gentlemen were friends of his.

One was Mr. Mole, the other Tom Carden, and the third Harvey.

The two latter had been reading at Mr. Mole's house, and had been invited by the tutor to have a little dinner at the "Clarendon."

"Dear me," said Mr. Mole, who had been drinking some very fine old '47 port, "that monkey bears a most striking resemblance to an ape belonging to Harkaway."

"Own brother to the Bishop, I'll swear," said Carden.

"Do you think," said Mr Mole, "that the Italian boy will bring him in here? We will see what tricks he can do."

"Let's put him through his paces. Shall I call his keeper, sir?" asked Harvey.

"Do," replied Mr. Mole. "If he is a clever monkey, I will buy him."

"Here, you fellow!" exclaimed Harvey, "come in here. Waiter, bring that man in here; we want to see his animal perform."

"Yes, sir," replied the waiter.

"You fellah, come in ; you're wanted," said the waiter.

Sir Sydney Dawson came up with his organ at that moment, and began to play "Champagne Charlie."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Harvey, "there is another foreign cove. The place swarms with them to-day."

Jack gave Sir Sydney a wink, and followed the waiter into the coffee-room.

He was so well disguised that no one recognized him or took him for anything else than he pretended to be.

"Can you talk English?" asked Mr. Mole.

"Si, signor," replied Jack.

"That isn't English. Say something one can understand."

"You give glass of champagne to poor Savoyard."

The gentlemen laughed.

"That's straight enough," remarked Carden, who poured out the wine and handed it to Jack.

"So you come from Savoy?" continued Mr. Mole.

"Where does your monkey hail from?"

"He come from the Malay Archipelago. He a Pisang monkey," said Jack, boldly.

"Well, that's very odd. I've been in those latitudes," replied Mr. Mole. "Perhaps you will tell me that your ape speaks English next."

"He very good talking monkey, signor. He speaks one, two, three language."

"The duece he does! What are they?"

"English, one; Dutch, two; Chinese, three," replied Jack, counting his fingers.

"He's a very intelligent monkey if that's true," remarked Mole, thinking he was being made fun of.

"Do you mean to say he can talk?" asked Tom Carden.

"Yes, signor."

"That be hanged for a yarn," answered Tom.

"Gently, Carden," replied Mr. Mole. "This is extremely interesting. Perhaps the creature is the missing link between the man and the monkey, of which naturalists and scientific people have so long been talking. Is it possible?"

"It's possible—everything is possible, but not likely," answered Tom.

"If this fellow is imposing upon us, we will give him in charge of the police. Now, look here, my lad, ask the creature if he ever saw me in Pisang."

Jack whispered to the monkey, who chattered to him in return.

"Si, signor, he knows you very well," replied Jack.

"What does he say?"

"You speak to him, signor; he soon answer you."

"Put him on the table," replied Mr. Mole with a smile.

"We will have none of your tricks."

Jack placed the ape on the table, and gave him orders in a sharp tone to sit still.

Then he retired to the doorway, which was some distance off.

The waiters kept their eyes upon Jack, and on the spoons at the same time.

"Now, sir, attention," exclaimed Mr. Mole, addressing the monkey. "What has become of the lost tribes of Israel?"

In a somewhat cracked but distinct voice the monkey appeared to say—

"Gone up the Baltic in a penny boat."

Mr. Mole started and turned pale.

Tom Carden rubbed his eyes, and the waiters regarded one another with astonishment.

Only Harvey did not appear lost in amazement.

He sidled up to the poor Italian boy, and whispered—

"Jack."

"Shut up, Dick," returned Jack, in the same low tone, "or you'll spoil the barney."

Harvey sidled away again, and Mr. Mole having recovered from his surprise, looked carefully at the monkey.

"Ahem!" he said, clearing his throat, "you seem to have hazy notions of history. Perhaps, sir, we shall find you more at home in, say geography. In what part of the world do you find the greatest cold?"

"In a penny ice shop up the Commercial Road," answered the monkey.

"You are badly educated," exclaimed Mr. Mole. "Now tell me, if you please, where you saw me last in Pisang?"

"Saw you last in Limbi."

"Indeed; under what circumstances, may I ask?" said Mole, adjusting his spectacles.

"You had two wives in Limbi, Ambonia and Alfura. Ambonia beat you with a flat-iron, and then threw the baby into the fire, and sat on it."

Mr. Mole shivered from head to foot, and said involuntarily—

"No. It was a bamboo with which she attacked me. I remember it well, and the babies were not then born. There is a strange mixture of truth and falsehood in this, but it is very remarkable."

Tom Carden was equally puzzled.

He had never heard a monkey speak before, and he agreed that it was most extraordinary.

"I think we ought to admit him to the university, and give him the benefit of an open scholarship," he said.

"Don't the brute look comical in his cap and gown?" exclaimed Harvey, laughing.

He wanted an excuse to get rid of some of the suppressed merriment with which he was bursting.

"I'm not half such a brute as you are," retorted the monkey; "and if you say much more to me, Dick Harvey, I'll have you out and put you in the horse-trough."

Harvey had to stuff his pocket-handkerchief into his mouth to stop his laughter.

"Dear me," replied Mr. Mole, "what a savage, uneducated beast it is."

"Tell you what, Isaac Mole," cried the monkey, loudly, "I didn't marry two wives and desert them in a foreign land, each with a young baby."

"He seems to know all about you, sir," exclaimed Carden, grinning.

"It's a lying, rascally, beastly thing, and I've a good mind to hit it," replied Mole, furiously.

"Yes, you do," said the monkey, "and I'll give you something hot, just to remind you of old times."

Mr. Mole made a threatening gesture at the ape, who, seizing a roll of bread, jumped to the mantelpiece, and sprang up to the top of the chimney-glass, where he sat glaring at Mole.

With some dexterity he threw the roll at his enemy, and knocked out a favourite false tooth, much to Mole's disgust.

"Dear me. Bless that monkey," he stuttered, "he has done me an injury."

"Wait till your precious babes come over from Limbi," replied the monkey.

"My babes?" repeated Mr. Mole.

"Yes, yours. They're on the way. Won't you go on the booze for a month?"

Everybody laughed at Mr. Mole, who grew more and more angry.

"Talk about something else," he said, dissembling his rage, "and I will give you a half-crown. Now tell me, why is the world made round?"

"Because lazy beggars like you shouldn't sleep in the corners," answered the monkey.

Harvey roared at this reply, and said—

“That is as good a sell as I have heard for a long time.”

“The creature’s no fool,” observed Tom Carden.

“You’re nothing wonderful,” replied the monkey.

“All you’re good for is rowing hard in a boat. It’s a pity you weren’t born a day-labourer instead of a gentleman.”

“Sorry I spoke. What have I done to offend him?” said Carden.

“He’s giving it us all round,” replied Harvey.

“Come here, my boy,” said Mr. Mole to Jack, who approached.

“Yes, signor,” he said; “are you satisfied?”

“Quite so. Will you sell your monkey?”

“Me sell for ten pound, English money, and then me go back to my contree; to the beautiful hills and valleys of my beautiful Savoy. Ah! I do love my contree. Savoy is my native contree. Yaas, I do love it so.”

He turned his eyes up, and put his hands together in an affecting manner.

“Poor boy; he’s homesick,” said Mr. Mole.

“Give poor Savoyard money.”

“Catch the monkey first. Put a rope or a chain round him first.”

Jack called the monkey, and put a piece of string round its neck, which he placed in Mr. Mole’s hand.

“There, signor; now he your property, and I go back to Savoy,” said Jack.

Mr. Mole counted out ten sovereigns, and with a low bow Jack departed as quickly as he could.

“Now,” said Mr. Mole, regarding his newly-acquired treasure with delight, “I will repair to my house and give a grand party, to which I will invite all the heads of houses and the distinguished men in the university to see my talking monkey.”

“You will be the envy of Europe, sir,” said Harvey.

“Yes,” remarked Carden, “and of Asia, Africa, and America, too.”

“He’ll tell you all about your wives, sir, and the blessed babies,” said Harvey.

“The less said about them the better,” replied Mr. Mole, adding—

"What say you, my hairy friend?"

To his surprise, the monkey made no answer.

"He's sulky. I've offended him," remarked Mr. Mole.

"Help me home with him, Harvey, will you?"

"Excuse me; I must get back to college. Carden will go," replied Harvey.

"Oh, with pleasure," answered Carden. "Just foot up the bill, and we'll start."

Mr. Mole paid the bill, and left the hotel, carrying the monkey on his arm.

"Ah!" said he to Carden, "this is in indeed a happy day for me. What a priceless treasure have I not acquired."

He continued to talk in the most rapturous style until he reached his house, into which he carried the monkey as tenderly as if it had been an infant.

CHAPTER XXII.

MUSIC IN THE CORN MARKET.

WHEN Jack quitted the hotel, he saw the Duke of Woodstock grinding away at his organ a few doors lower down.

An irate tobacconist, who did not like organs, was telling him to move on.

A sympathising crowd, as is usual in such cases, took the part of the organ-man.

"Go away!" said the tabacconist, whose name was Brown.

The duke turned the handle faster.

Coming on to the pavement, Brown said—

"I tell you I won't have it."

"I'm deaf. You must speak out louder," answered the duke.

"Take your hook!" thundered the tradesman.

"Come inside?—all right. What will you give me?"

As he spoke the duke moved towards the shop.

"You do play inside my shop, that's all, and I'll soon have a bobby!" cried Brown.

"What do you want? Is it 'Sally come up?' asked the duke.

"I'll 'Sally' you. Go back to your own country. Oh! here's a policeman. Constable, take this man into custody."

The policeman laid his hand upon the duke's arm.

"Come along of me," he said; "you're charged."

Jack had all this time been going round amongst the crowd, with his old cap in his hand, collecting coppers, which flowed in freely.

The duke perceived this, and exclaimed—

"I say, that's not fair. Look at him collaring the half-pence! He's got all the chips!"

"I thought you were a foreigner," said Brown, triumphantly. "Why, you know English as well as I do. He's an impostor! Lock him up!"

The duke's affected manner was forgotten for the moment.

"You may have the organ," he said. "But I'll be hanged if you're going to have me."

The policeman held on with a grip of iron.

Imitating the tobacconist's voice, Jack made him say—

"Let the man go. I like his music."

"You said just now, 'lock him up,'" answered the constable, somewhat staggered.

"I've changed my mind, and shan't charge him. Let him go," continued Jack.

Releasing his hold, the policeman said, in a tone of disgust—

"It's my opinion you don't know your own mind."

"This way!" whispered the duke to Harkaway.

"Come along; it's getting too hot!"

"But the organ?"

"That will be all right. Cut on with me."

Leaving the policeman with the organ, they ran quickly up the Corn Market.

The tobacconist seized the policeman by the arm and shook him.

"What did you let the fellow go for?" he vociferated.

"Didn't you tell me to?" asked the astonished constable.

"I never opened my mouth, and I tell you plainly, it's my opinion you're a humbug. I'll report you!" said Brown, shaking his fist at him. "I'm a respectable tradesman, and not to be played with as if I was the Lord Mayor's fool."

The crowd, which had taken the part of the organ-grinder from the first, began to hiss in a threatening manner.

"You'd better go in, or I won't answer for the consequences," said the policeman.

"I shan't. I've a right to be here," said Brown.

"Smash his windows!" exclaimed a voice in the mob.

He had scarcely spoken before a shower of stones fell upon the glass, and it was not until a reinforcement of police came up that the crowd was dispersed.

Jack and the Duke of Woodstock ran into the "Mitre," forgetting how they were dressed.

"A bottle of fiz. Quick!" said the duke to the waiter.

"We only serve gentlemen," replied the waiter, stiffly.

"What do you call us, you insolent ruffian!" cried the duke.

"I take you for a couple of cadgers or thieves, and if you don't step it, I'll help you."

The duke caught sight of himself in the glass, and burst out laughing.

"You're right, Alfred," he said. "I forgot the togethery, and you were not to know who we were."

"If I've made a mistake," said the waiter, hesitatingly, "I'll——"

"It doesn't matter. We'll get back to college! only, when you see Mr. Harkaway and the Duke of Woodstock again, don't be in too great a hurry to kick them out of the 'Mitre.'"

As the two young men left the room, the waiter rubbed his eyes.

"Is this a lark?" he muttered, "or is it some artful dodge? Blessed if I know. The gents here are always up to something, and yet there are suspicious characters about."

When the duke reached St. Aldate's he found Sir Sydney had already returned, and Clinker the scout was mending his organ.

"Where's the other, sir?" asked the scout.

"Taken in charge. Go down to the police-station and get it; pay the bobby who's got it what he asks. Come back and start the two Italian coves."

In a short time they had changed their clothes, and repaired to Dawson's rooms.

The duke once more became the effeminate and lisping dandy.

Sir Sydney was also dressed, and amusing himself by counting a quantity of halfpence.

"Three and sevenpence farthing," he said, as they entered. "That's not bad for one hour. Organ grinding must be a good trade."

"It was your pretty face that did it with the women and slaves," answered Jack.

"What's your total?" continued Dawson.

"Woodstock and I will divide, as I collected some of his coppers," returned Jack. "Look here; four and five-pence halfpenny."

"I've only got a—aw—a bob; one solitary Robertus," said the duke.

"Then Dawson wins the bet."

"That's a moral," replied Dawson. "Where's your monkey, Jack?"

"I've sold it."

"Who to?"

"Old Mole," replied Jack.

"Never! How did you work that?"

"Oh, beautifully. I ventriloquise, you know, and I made the monkey talk. Mole was charmed. He gave me ten pounds for it, and thinks he has discovered the missing link."

"That's grand! What chaff we shall have with him," said Sir Sydney.

"Not bad ideaw. Easy thing, though, to—aw—sell an old fool like—aw—Mole," remarked the duke.

While they were talking, Harvey came in, and was offered some champagne cup, which Dawson had been brewing.

"Don't you think this sort of thing very disgraceful?" he asked.

"You're a nice fellow to talk," replied Jack. "What do you know about it?"

"I've heard it all from Buster. If this is the way you spend your time, and bring the university into disgrace, you'll cut a good figure when you go into the schools!"

"I've passed my little go," said the duke. "Awful boaw, little go; don't—aw—know what I shall do when I go in for my greats."

"Who won the bet?"

"Dawson, with lots of bronzes to spare," replied Jack.

"I suppose you are going down to Mole presently, just to undeceive him?"

"That is my intention. Won't he grunt over it?" said Jack. "Why, it will be chaff against him all his life."

"He firmly believes the monkey can talk. You did it splendidly."

"Of course I did, my innocent; and I should have had you, too, if I hadn't winked."

"I don't know that. I'm not easily caught."

"Didn't you see a ghost once in Singapore, Dick?" asked Jack, with a quiet laugh.

"I don't mean to say I'm always wide awake; no one is. Come on down to Mole's. I want to see the end of it."

"All right," replied Jack, and wishing the others good-bye, they strolled up St. Giles's, and stopped at Mr. Mole's house.

CHAPTER XXIII.

TRAINING AT PUTNEY.

MR. MOLE was sitting at tea. A comfortable fire blazed on the hearth, the kettle smoked on the hob, and he had placed the monkey on a chair.

"Would you like a cup of tea?" he asked.

The monkey made no reply, but stretched out his paw for a nut, some of which stood on the table, having been specially sent for.

"Ah! you would prefer nuts. It is a pity you will not answer me. Have I done anything to offend you?"

No reply again.

"Come in, Harkaway, and you, Harvey," said Mr. Mole, as these two stood in the doorway. "I have something to show you."

"What's that, sir, a whale?"

"No; a monkey. A most remarkable animal indeed."

"I thought it was something in the natural history line," exclaimed Jack.

"This monkey can beat yours, Harkaway. It talks—positively it can converse."

"That won't do, sir; when I hear him I'll believe it, and not before," said Jack, with a shake of his head.

"I appeal to Harvey," replied Mr. Mole. "He was with me when I made this truly wonderful purchase."

"I heard some one speak, sir, that I admit," answered Harvey.

"My servant has gone to invite Dear Liddel and Mr. Whewell to take tea with me, for I am determined that everyone in the university shall hear of the prodigy."

"Is that the beast?" asked Jack, pointing to the Bishop.

"Yes. Observe him closely."

"Well, it's a funny thing; but I have lost my monkey, and that one bears a striking resemblance to it."

Mr. Mole changed colour.

"Nonsense," he said, adding, "still, when I come to think of it, there is a likeness."

"You've been imposed upon by some one, sir."

"But it spoke; I heard it."

"Perhaps the seller was a ventriloquist," suggested Jack.

Mr. Mole's lower jaw fell.

He saw, or fancied he saw, the trick now, and remembering Jack's powers, conjectured that, in the language of the vulgar, he had been "sold."

"Was it you?" he exclaimed. "Did you dress up to play this trick upon me? Answer me. I will not be trifled with. No one shall make me a laughing stock with impunity."

"I confess I did," answered Jack. "I sold you the monkey. Who else could know all about Limbi and your two wives, sir?"

"Of course. Well, I can never forgive you. If I had not invited the heads of houses to see the creature, and likewise written a long letter to the local journal, which has ere this been dropped into the editor's box of the *Oxford Times*, I should not care so much."

Jack could not help laughing at his distress, which was comical in the extreme.

"You shall not laugh at me," cried Mr. Mole, half-crying with vexation. "Get out of my sight."

"Won't you give me a cup of tea first, sir?"

"No tea do you have in this house. Be off, and take your wretched monkey with you"

Jack called Soapy Sam, who at once jumped into his arms and lovingly rubbed his head against his master's cheek.

"Stay!" exclaimed Mr. Mole, "my ten pounds. Restore to me my money."

"Not a rap. I'm going to give a dinner, sir, with that, and if you holloa too loud, I shall tell the story to all the men I know in college."

Mr. Mole groaned dismally.

"Good-bye, sir. You ought to start a natural history class. Neither Darwin nor Owen would have a chance with you," laughed Jack.

In a fit of desperation Mr. Mole threw the muffins at him, but missed and only spoilt a bran-new Brussels.

"Better luck next time," said Jack.

He and Harvey went back to college and found Tom Carden waiting for them.

"Hullo, Carden. What's your little game?" exclaimed Jack.

"My diminutive amusement," replied Carden, "is to put the drag on."

"Whom or what?"

"You, my pippin."

"What for?"

"I'll tell you. It strikes me that now you and Woodstock and Dawson have got together again, you will go the pace too fast."

"Well?" ejaculated Jack.

"You will be no good in the eight. We can't afford to lose our best oar."

"Thank you for the compliment," replied Jack, laughing. "What has aroused the ire of my gentle commodore?"

"I heard about your performance this afternoon, and if you go on like this, you will be gated. As it is, you didn't turn up in the boat, and we had to put a waterman in to fill up."

"Suppose I promise to be a good boy?"

"In that case, I will not say anything more."

"Have a game at crib," replied Jack, "you surly old bear, and just allow me one pint of Oxford ale."

"Not a drop. I expect you've had enough to-day," answered Carden.

"Only a portion of one champagne cup."

"That's bad. You can't train on champagne. Remember, we go down to Putney in a month, and the honor of the 'varsity is at stake."

"It's in no danger in your hands."

"But it is in those of our youngsters, who are strong as lions, and simple as doves."

"What's the latest from Cambridge?" asked Jack.

"*Bell's Life* says they are a stunning good crew; the best that have been seen on the Cam for ever so long."

"All the more credit in licking them. I like a ding-dong race from start to finish," exclaimed Jack.

"So do I; but we must not leave anything to chance, and all I can tell you is that if the coxswain of the O. U. B. C. is displeased with any man's form, he will put him out of the boat at the eleventh hour."

"It's bad enough to work hard, but worse to be bullied," grumbled Jack.

"Discipline and training will always pull a race off," replied Tom Carden. "Put that pipe down, sir."

"What, not one pipe?" Jack groaned.

"If you want to lose your wind, do it; if you don't, put it down."

"Isn't he a tyrant, Dick?" said Jack, appealing to Harvey.

"Awful! I wouldn't stand it," replied Harvey.

"He must do as he's told, and I will have him up at six to-morrow for a ten-mile spin in flannels," answered Carden, with an authoritative nod of the head.

There was no escape from Carden's discipline, and Jack did not attempt to fight against it any longer.

The time soon came for the rival crews to leave Oxford and Cambridge, and take up their residence at Putney.

As usual, the Oxonians went to the "Fox and Hounds Hotel."

The Cantabs to the "Star and Garter."

It was generally thought that the crews were very equally matched.

If anything, sporting prophets were rather inclined to favour Cambridge.

But the knowing ones of the universities looked at Tom Carden's swinging strokes, and Harkaway's broad shoulders and bull-like strength.

"That man Harkaway," said a man, who had been once stroke of the Eton eight, "is like a machine."

"Yes," answered his friend, who was captain of the Leander Club; "I call him a machine. If he remains fit and well, it's a moral certainty for Oxford."

So opinions were divided.

Some thought it a "moral" for the Cantabs, others the same for the dwellers by the classic Isis.

It wanted but a week to the great race, which drives all London and its suburbs wild with excitement.

Jack had rowed up with the crew to Barnes, and leaving the boat at May's boat-house, crossed over the river to walk home across the little common at Barnes.

They had done the distance in twenty minutes, three seconds, which was tolerably good.

Tom Carden and Jack walked side by side, as carefully muffled up in boating coats and flannels—for the weather was chilly and damp—as if they had been thoroughbred race-horses; and thoroughbreds they were.

Suddenly a man jumped up from behind a heap of furze bushes.

He had a sunburnt, weather-beaten countenance, the expression of which was villanously evil.

But this was nothing.

That which struck Jack and made him turn pale was the strange fact that he had only one arm.

He thought of the dark night in the Iffley Road, when a cowardly assassin tried to stab him.

He thought of the gallant way in which Fabian Hall pushed in front of him, and received the deadly knife in his side.

He could see the poor fellow carried bleeding into a house, and, looking after that, he saw him, pale and emaciated, obliged to leave his college for a time to recruit his shattered health.

Involuntarily he exclaimed—

"Hunston!"

To Jack's startled exclamation the one-armed man replied,

"Yes, I am Hunston, and I recognise you as easily as you do me. You are Jack Harkaway."

"There is nothing to be ashamed of in that," answered Jack.

"You mean to imply that there is something to be ashamed of in being Hunston?"

"If you like to interpret my remark in that way, you are welcome," replied Jack, carelessly.

"You always were insulting me," said Hunston, with a vindictive glance.

"I haven't forgotten our schooldays, or our adventures abroad, nor yet that night in the Iffley Road."

It was Hunston's turn to go white now.

"What do you mean?" he gasped.

"What I say."

"I know nothing of the Iffley Road, nothing at all; but I know this, I have come back from the Malays, which you little expected, my fine fellow," exclaimed Hunston.

Tom Carden, thinking the conversation was becoming of a private nature and that he was not wanted, approached.

"I'll go on, Harkaway," he said.

"Don't do anything of the sort," replied Jack.

"But you have met an old friend."

"Rather say an old enemy."

"Still he is a stranger to me, and if you do not think fit to introduce me to the—a—the gentleman——"

"Say the scoundrel," exclaimed Jack, angrily.

"Well, I don't want to interfere in a fellow's private affairs," urged Carden.

"My dear fellow, I do not wish, in the present instance, to have anything private from you," replied Jack, decidedly. "This man and I have nothing in common. Whatever he has to say to me may be heard by you, or by the whole world."

"Oh, if that's the case, I'll hang on," said Carden.

He folded his arms and looked rather more insolently than curiously at Hunston.

His gaze was returned in the same spirit.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HUNSTON AT WORK.

NEVER was Harkaway more surprised than when he saw Hunston on Barnes Common.

It will be recollected that Hunston had always been his determined enemy.

At school, at sea, on land.

It was all the same.

There was no conciliating Hunston, or making a decent member of society of him.

It seemed as if the man was born, and bred, and educated a scamp and a villain.

Jack had hoped that he would never see him again.

He had fancied that he perished when the British ship attacked and shelled the pirates' stronghold.

The hope had proved to be fallacious.

"I escaped, I tell you, from the pirates," continued Hunston.

"It's a matter of indifference to me," answered Jack.

"No, it is not—you will not find it so. I was on the point of dying. They told me I should die."

"Pity you didn't. You're no use to yourself or anyone else."

"When I thought of you, and all the debt of vengeance I owed you, it gave me new life," Hunston went on.

"What harm can you do me?" asked Jack.

"I'll try to do you a good deal."

"Look here, old man," said Jack, "I consider this intrusion an impertinence."

"I can't help what you consider it."

"More than that, I'll have you bound over to keep the peace, for using threats."

"You don't know where to find me," answered Hunston, savagely, "and you never will. I shall always be dogging you and hitting you in the dark, but you won't know who does it."

"Go away," said Jack, "I don't want you."

"I shall not go away," replied Hunston, putting himself in front of him.

"Then I shall have to make you."

Jack doubled his fists as he spoke.

"If you are coward enough to hit a one-armed man, that's another thing," said Hunston, with a careless laugh.

"So you presume on that, do you?"

"You did it. You made me what I am; a maimed man. Curse you for it!"

"Was it not your own fault? Why didn't you let me alone?"

"Because I did not choose to. You ask what harm I can do you. Emily isn't your wife yet, is she?" said Hunston.

"How dare you mention her name to me?" asked Jack, angrily.

"Perhaps you prefer Miss Hilda Manasses. You see, I know all about your Oxford life," cried Hunston, with a provoking laugh.

"Come along, Carden," said Jack. "This man is becoming a nuisance."

"All right, old fellow; lead on," replied the captain of the Oxford crew.

"Wait a bit," said Hunston. "Take this slip of paper with you first."

"What is it?" inquired Jack, shrinking back, he knew not why.

"It's a summons to appear before a judge in chambers to-morrow."

"What for?"

"To show cause why you should not be committed to prison for not paying Mr. Moses Manasses a thousand pounds."

"So you are doing the Jew's dirty work, are you?" said Jack, with a contemptuous glance.

"Why shouldn't I, if it suits me?" returned Hunston, boldly.

"And playing into the hands of Kemp and Davis."

"They are decent fellows enough."

"Are they?"

"Well, we have one bond of union, and that is our hatred for you," replied Hunston.

Jack took the piece of paper, and tore it up in a passion.

He cast the pieces to the winds, and they fluttered into the furze bushes.

"I call you to witness, Mr. Carden," said Hunston, "that it was a legal service."

"I know nothing about these things," answered Carden.

"He will disregard it at his peril."

"What will be the consequence?" asked Carden.

"Let him find out. I shall say no more."

"But what is it? Does he owe the money?"

"Ask him," said Hunston, turning sullenly on his heel and walking rapidly away.

Harkaway and Carden proceeded some distance in silence.

At length Carden said—

"What is all this about? I don't want to pry into your secrets, but do you owe Manasses this money?"

"Yes," replied Jack, shortly. "I suppose I do."

"How?"

"I was rooked out of a bill for that amount."

"By whom?"

"Kemp."

"I always thought that fellow Kemp was a bad lot. By Jove, it's awkward," exclaimed Carden reflectively.

"What would you do?" asked Jack.

"Hanged if I know. Take no notice of it till after the race, anyhow."

"Do you think it will be all right?" asked Jack, anxiously.

"Better get a solicitor, perhaps; and yet that will only upset you. Keep quiet till the race is over, for goodness, sake," answered Carden.

"I should not like to worry myself. Nothing takes it out of a man so much as worrying. Does it?"

"Nothing, I should think."

"Fancy that fellow turning lawyer's clerk, and doing that sort of thing," said Jack. "I thought him dead amongst the Malays."

"Think of something else? They surely can't do much in a week," replied Carden. "When we have rowed you can see to it."

"Shall I dismiss it from my mind?"

"By all means. Let's have a game at billiards."

"I'd rather have a quiet pipe to soothe my nerves," exclaimed Jack.

"That I can't allow. Turn your thoughts in another direction, that's a good fellow. What's going to win the Derby?"

Jack made some random, hap-hazard answer, and they continued to chatter about various matters till they reached the hotel at Putney.

He tried to put on a cheerful countenance.

But in reality his mind was ill at ease.

The reappearance of Hunston on the scene was enough to disconcert him.

When he knew that he was working in with Manasses, Kemp and Davis, he felt that he had real cause for alarm.

Nevertheless, he took no notice of the summons to appear before a judge.

Some days elapsed.

He fancied that Hunston's conduct was only intended to frighten him.

In fact he began to laugh at the whole affair.

Harvey had come up to London, so had Sir Sydney Dawson, the Duke of Woodstock, and other men he knew.

Half Oxford and Cambridge were in town to see the race.

Harvey called upon him at the hotel where the crew were stopping.

"I hear good accounts of you, Jack, in the papers," said Harvey.

"Do you?" asked Jack modestly, as if he never read the papers.

Whereas it was great fun for the crew every morning to look at all the morning journals, directly after breakfast.

They rather liked the criticisms of the press.

"It is the general opinion that you are the mainstay of the crew," answered Harvey.

"That's all rot," said Jack. "There are many better men in the boat than I."

"I can't help what people say."

"No, of course not, and it's very kind of you to cheer me up."

"I suppose it is no use asking you to have a friendly drink."

"After the race, dear boy."

"There is that fellow Kemp, betting against Oxford like steam," exclaimed Harvey.

"Is he?" said Jack, thinking of Hunston.

"Yes. Isn't it rather seedy to bet against one's own university?"

"Kemp generally knows what he is about, though he was a little out over the steeple-chase; still, it is no use losing one's money. The betting is even, you know."

"But he is laying five to four on Cambridge. Is there anything wrong?"

"Not that I know of," replied Jack.

"Are you going out to-day?" asked Harvey.

"Just going for a paddle, that's all. We have done our heavy work."

"Well, ta, ta, for the present. I'll back you up like bricks to-morrow. When do you start?"

"Not till four o'clock in the afternoon, because of the tide," replied Jack.

They separated.

The Oxford crew went out for a paddle as far as the Soap Works and back again, and all their admirers were in raptures about them.

In the evening Jack was standing with Carden in the entrance to the hotel.

A couple of men came up.

One advanced and said—

"Mr. Harkaway, I believe."

"That's my name," replied Jack.

He looked curiously at the shabby genteel person who had accosted him.

"A lawyer's clerk for money," was his mental exclamation, "or a sheriff's officer."

"You are my prisoner," said the man.

"What do you mean?"

Jack started back, and a dangerous fire flashed from his eyes.

"I arrest you at the suit of Mr. Moses Manasses, of Oxford, for a debt of one thousand pounds, and you must come with me."

"Go with you?" repeated Jack, in an abstracted manner.

"Unless you can pay the money."

"That is impossible, at so short a notice. Why did you not tell me before?"

"You had due notice. The summons was served upon you, and, as you did not appear, the judge made an order that if the money was not paid in three days, you were to be imprisoned for six weeks at Holloway Gaol, on the debtors' side. I only do my duty, you know, sir."

"But I'm going to row in the Oxford eight to-morrow," said Jack.

"I don't think you will, sir," replied the officer, with a cunning leer.

"Can't you let this stand over?" said Jack.

"Impossible, sir."

"Consider my engagement."

"That's why they've put the screw on; that is the reason of the arrest. Old Manasses of Oxford is a rare fox. We know him of old. He's up to all the moves on the board."

"What can I do?" said Jack, turning to Carden.

"Come into a private room," replied Carden, "and let us talk for a moment. It will never do to have a scene here, and let all this get about."

"I'll follow you, sir," said the officer.

Carden led the way into a private room, and the door closed upon the three of them.

"Now," said Carden, sitting down, "let us proceed to business. This is not entirely unexpected. Show me your warrant for the arrest."

The man did so, and the document was found perfectly legal.

"Have you had notice of this, Harkaway?" continued Carden.

"Yes," replied Jack; "I received a letter, but threw it in the fire."

"Can you get the money from your friends?"

"I don't like to ask," answered Jack. "My people might pay, but I don't think they would."

"Then there is nothing for it but to go with this gentleman."

Jack groaned.

"It is an infamous plot. I can see that Kemp has been working upon old Manasses," he said.

"We shall lose the race without you, that's a certainty."

"Can't you put another man in my place?"

"We must; but who can we find as good as you at a moment's notice?" replied Carden. "You have been in training for six months, and are an exceptionally good oar."

"It's a case then. Poor old Oxford!" moaned Jack. "I don't care for myself so much—I suppose that I shall get out of it somehow—but I do feel for the university. If this had come after the race, I should not have minded a snap of the fingers."

"There's the sting of it. The rascals knew how it would cut you up," said Carden.

"Well," exclaimed Jack, philosophically, "it's no use making any bones about it. Call a cab, officer. I'll go with you. Explain it all privately to the crew, Tom, will you kindly?"

"Leave that to me," replied Carden, wringing his hand warmly.

"Thanks," said Jack.

The tears came into his eyes.

A greater blow could not have been administered to him.

"If any thing can be done for you between this time and four o'clock to-morrow, old man, it shan't be my fault if it isn't," exclaimed Carden.

A few minutes passed in silence.

Then the cab drove up.

Jack followed the officer, got in, and was slowly driven off to the City gaol at Holloway.

For the first time in his life he was a prisoner.

A prisoner for debt, with little chance of release.

"If I could only have rowed in the race," he kept on repeating to himself, as the cab lumbered along the dull and muddy roads to the north of London.

CHAPTER XXV.

IMPRISONED FOR DEBT.

THOUGH only imprisoned for a short time, and on the debtor's side of the large castle-like building at Holloway, Jack was miserable enough.

The feeling that he was living in the same building with desperate criminals depressed his spirits.

A consciousness of the triumph of his enemies, and last, but not least, losing his chance of distinguishing himself in the great race, completely overwhelmed him.

The unfortunate debtors were of all kinds and descriptions.

There were a clergyman, a barrister, an ex-member of Parliament, several merchants and poor gentlemen, tradesmen, and others.

They crowded round the new arrival, and offered him spirits and tobacco, which had been smuggled into the gaol, the authorities winking at their consumption.

But Jack declined everything.

He was sick at heart.

The disease was of the mind, not of the body.

This, however, is the worst form of disease to cure.

Retiring into his room, which was nothing better than a whitewashed cell, he lighted a candle, and throwing himself in a chair, gave himself up to bitter reflection.

Kemp and Davis had been too many for him, and Hunston was evidently in alliance with them in some singular manner.

The blow was the more severe as it had come from Hunston.

At length Jack rose, and paced the room impatiently.

He was like a caged lion.

If he could have broken the iron bars of the windows, or forced his way out of the gloomy place, he would have done so.

His period of depression had worn off, and he became furious.

An intense longing for liberty attacked him.

Some men in the adjoining apartment were playing at whist

Their shouts, laughter, and imprecations fell upon his ears.

The poor prisoners were making merry.

He cursed them for it in his heart.

How dared they be merry when he was so sad?

He forgot that they had been inmates of the debtor's prison longer than he had.

Their minds had become hardened, and the misery which had weighed them down at first had worn off.

At length the time came for the light to be extinguished.

He was not sleepy, and casting himself on the bed, dressed as he was, lay tossing about for hours.

Towards morning the grey dawn peeped through the blindless windows.

He fell into a fitful slumber.

Then he was disturbed by horrid dreams.

About eight o'clock he woke hot and feverish.

It was with difficulty that he ate a piece of toast and swallowed a cup of tea.

He still wore his boating coat, guernsey, and scarf.

No attempt did he make to shave, or otherwise make himself tidy.

What did he care about the adornment of his person?

Who could see him in prison, and what did it matter if any one did?

Was he not a poor, heart-broken, wretched fellow, who had lost all interest in life now he was out of the Oxford eight.

That was what he thought.

At ten o'clock visitors were allowed to enter the gaol to see the prisoners for debt.

To Jack's astonishment, he was told a gentleman wanted to see him.

"Can he come up here?" he asked.

"No," was the reply. "You must go down to him."

Thinking it was Carden, Jack hurried downstairs, and entering the common room, beheld Moses Manasses.

"This is adding insult to injury," he exclaimed.

"Pardon me; it is not," answered the Jew. "I have come to see you with a special object."

"State it briefly, if you please, as I have no inclination to talk to you, and would rather be alone," replied Jack, bluntly.

"You owe me money."

"I never had a farthing from you."

"That is true," answered Manasses. "But you owed it to another for a debt of honour."

"Don't talk about it. I admit the debt," said Jack, pettishly.

"Well," continued the Jew, "I did not treat you harshly; I said that I would take the interest only."

"Why didn't you stick to your word, then?"

"Because you have treated me badly."

"I should like to know how," inquired Jack with a disdainful laugh.

"Did you not make love to my daughter?"

"I'll swear I never meant anything; on my word of honour, I didn't," replied Jack, earnestly.

"Still the girl thought you did, and she loves you. Am I to have my child's happiness sacrificed through your thoughtlessness? Is it fair? Answer me that, Mr. Harkaway."

"If I had anything to blame myself for, I should decidedly say 'No, it is not fair,'" replied Jack.

The Jew paced the room for a moment or two, as if in deep thought.

"Look here," said Jack, stopping him, "you are rich, Mr. Manasses."

"More so than you think."

"I'm glad of it, for your sake. Well, I will pay you some of these fine days. Let me out to-day, and you can put me in again to-morrow."

"Ah, you want to row. It's a fine thing to be in the university eight; you get your name in the papers. I know all that," replied Manasses with a cunning laugh.

"Hang the papers, and the publicity of them; I'd rather be without that," said Jack hastily. "It is the honour and the glory of rowing a winning race, that's what I care about."

"It comes to the same thing. You want to row, do you not, Mr. Harkaway?"

"I'd give my life for it," answered Jack.

"I thought so."

"That is why you have put the screw on, you hard-hearted, artful old wretch."

"Call me no names. I want your friendship, not your abuse."

"You don't go the right way to get it, you confoundedly dodgy son of Israel."

"Can I help my race?" exclaimed Manasses. "Is there any harm in being a Jew? In what is a Christian better than a Jew?"

"We won't argue that point," replied Jack; "stick to business. Will you let me out?"

"Yes," replied Manasses, as if with a sudden burst of good-nature.

"You will?" cried Jack, gleefully.

"I will."

"Then I'll say you are the best money-lending Jew in Europe, and you ought to have a putty medal. When can I go?"

"In a short time."

"Make haste, the crew will be getting wild without me. I'll drive you down to Putney in a hansom; we'll have a bit of dinner together and you can see the race, and put your loose cash on Oxford," said Jack.

"Not so fast, Mr. Harkaway," replied the Jew, shaking his head.

Jack's countenance fell.

"You said I might go," he exclaimed.

"On one condition," answered Manasses.

"What is that? Don't beat about the bush, come to the point, slick. I can't stand any humbugging suspense," cried Jack, impatiently.

"Will you make the only amend in your power, and marry my daughter, Hilda?" said the Jew.

"I can't, my good fellow," replied Jack in despair.

He had been raised to the height of hope and he was dashed into the depths of despair.

"Is that your condition?" he added.

"It is."

"If I won't marry Miss Hilda Manasses, you won't let me out of this beastly hole, and I can't row at Putney to-day?"

"Exactly."

"It is impossible," said Jack, with a blank look.

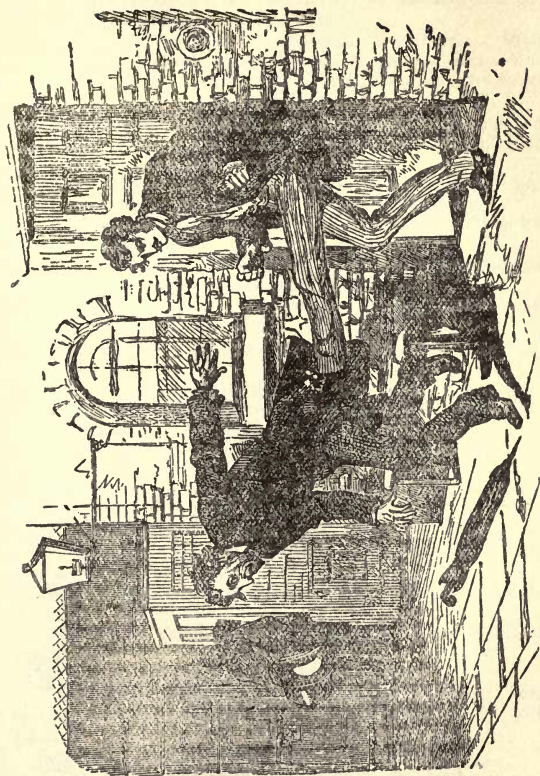
"Why?" asked the Jew, whose eager countenance bespoke the interest he took in this conversation.

"Because I am engaged to another young lady, and putting my affections for her, which is the growth of years, on one side, I cannot as a man of honour throw her over."

"Then you must stay here," replied the Jew, heaving a deep sigh.

"You're a pretty, cool, calculating old beast, to try and work upon me like this," continued Jack, in a rage.

The Jew remained silent.



“‘THAT WILL TEACH YOU TO INSULT A GENTLEMAN,’ SAID JACK.”

*Oxford, * page 165.*

"You know," Jack went on, "that I would do almost any mortal thing in the world to row to-day, and you come and tantalize me in this way."

"Marry my daughter," persisted Manasses. "Why not?—she is beautiful, she is young, she is rich. You never need do an hour's work all your life, and she loves you."

"Turn it up," cried Jack, crossly; "you've got my answer. I'm very sorry for the girl, but I can't help her."

"Very well," cried the Jew, red with passion, "you shall pay the penalty, so help me father Abraham."

"Then I'm Jew'd, that's all," replied Jack, putting his hands in his pockets.

"Pay the money and you can go. Don't be obstinate, Mr. Harkaway," said Manasses, mockingly.

"If you don't go, I'll pay you," cried Jack, raising his foot threateningly.

"Nice sort of place this to stay in," continued the Jew, looking round him.

Jack could bear no more.

He was only human after all, and his endurance had its limits.

He gave the Jew a violent kick which lifted him into the air.

This was followed by another and another, until at last Mr. Moses Manasses found himself on his hands and knees in the yard.

"That will teach you to insult a gentleman, you black-guard," cried Jack.

The Jew clenched his fist threateningly as he rose to his feet.

"Sheer off," cried Jack, "unless you want the dose repeated."

Manasses was prudent in his generation.

He pocketed the indignity to which he has been subjected, and went away with a heavy heart and a sore back.

Jack felt better after kicking the Jew.

"That's done me good, at any rate," he cried.

"What's that?" asked a voice at his elbow.

Jack turned round and beheld Tom Carden, who had just been admitted.

"How are you, old fellow?" asked Jack. "I am glad to see you. This is good of you."

"What's up? I saw old Manasses bolting out of the gate like one o'clock as I came in."

"I've been kicking him, taking cool kicks at his stern, as if we'd been having a kick about at Oxford and he was the foot-ball."

"That's cheerful," laughed Carden.

"There is no hope of getting out, though, since I've been unable to make terms with my detaining creditor," continued Jack.

"What's to be done?"

"Nothing. Case of grin and bear it, though I'm as wild as a hawk or a pair of hawks."

"We've got a substitute," remarked Carden.

"Have you? Who is he?" asked Jack jealously.

It cut him to the heart to know that some one else was going to row in his place.

"A man named Franklin."

"Franklin of St. Aldate's?"

"Yes."

"I know," replied Jack. "He's one of our servitors."

He must be forgiven if he spoke slightly contemptuously of Franklin.

It *was* hard to be supplanted, and still harder, after training hard for the great race for six months, after looking forward to the race all through the dreary winter.

"Well," he added, as if sorry for his momentary jealousy, "Franklin's a good man."

"Steady fellow, but you could give him pounds, and beat him in a canter," replied Carden.

"Perhaps," replied Jack.

Carden regarded Harkaway's brawny shoulders, strong back, and sinewy arms, which were all muscle.

"You've got a bicep like a giant," he said.

"Never mind," sighed Jack, "it's no good now. I shall never go in a boat again."

"Don't say that. You'll have a chance next year."

Jack looked up and said, "Will the fellows trust me?"

CHAPTER XXVI.

HILDA'S GENEROSITY.

"WHY should they not trust you?" asked Carden.

"Look how I have thrown them over at the last minute," replied Jack, sorrowfully.

"It's not your fault."

"What do they say?" inquired Jack, with evident anxiety.

If we are in undeserved trouble, all of us like to know what our friends and the public say of us.

"Say," repeated Carden, "why, they declare it's a beastly chouse. It will play old Harry with Moses Manasses."

"Will it?"

"Yes, every fellow I have spoken to swears he'd never do a bill with him if he was so hard up that he didn't know which way to turn for a brass farthing."

"You haven't whacked it about, have you—not much, I mean?"

"I haven't," replied Carden; "I kept it uncommonly quiet, I can tell you, but some kind friend or other has made a noise over it."

"How do you know?" asked Jack.

"Haven't you seen the morning papers?"

"No; hadn't the heart to look."

"Well, it is stated by every one there is a change in the Oxford crew."

"Really."

"They say that Harkaway is put out. The reason is not generally known, but it is supposed he had over-trained."

"Overtrained," cried Jack indignantly, "why, I was never in better fettle in my life."

He took up a poker lying in the grate, and striking his muscular arm with it, broke it in half as easily as if it had been a bit of glass.

"Of course, we know you are all right," replied Carden; "but when the reporter of the *Times* called upon us last

night, and asked to see me, as a rumour that something wrong had got afloat, I was not going to tell him the real truth."

"What did you tell him?"

"Simply that we were obliged to change Mr. Harkaway, and that probably Mr. Franklin of St. Aldate's would take his place."

"You gave no reason."

"Was it likely I was going to give those newspaper fellows your whole story, and enable them to write a column upon university extravagance, and the tendency of young men at Oxford to get into debt, and all that sort of thing?"

"You're a good fellow, Tom," replied Jack.

"I hope so, old man. I try to be," answered the captain of the O. U. B. C., looking as modest as a young girl who has not had her first kiss.

"How's the betting?" asked Jack.

"Very flattering to you."

"How do you mean?"

"I'll tell you. We've gone down to two to one, laid freely against us, since the change, and it isn't a pound to a pinch of snuff, that six to four on Cambridge isn't laid before the start."

A flush of pleasure mantled Jack's face.

"So the outsiders think something of me?" he asked.

"Rather! There is quite a wail over your loss. You are supposed to be seedy; we have kept the real thing dark. Don't get riley; old Mo' can't be blamed for wanting his money. It's business."

"Business I don't like," growled Jack.

"Rather blame Kemp, and Davis, and Hunston."

"Perhaps, but Manasses is playing his own game very artfully," replied Jack.

"My dear fellow," said Carden, "I have come to the conclusion that money is the great thing in this world."

"So have I."

"What do people say about a man? Either he is a good fellow and pays his way, which means that he parts freely, or that he is a duffer and a swindler, which means that he doesn't part."

"Because he can't very often."

"We go upon a basis of R. M. D, or ready money

down, that's the thing ; and now I've given you a lecture on the advantage of having heaps of coin and paying cash, I'll take my hook. Bye bye ; keep up your pluck."

"Never fear," answered Jack, trying to look jolly. "Hope you'll win."

"Hope so too, but wouldn't bet on it."

Tom Carden took his leave, and left Jack the picture of misery.

He did not long remain so, however, for he was startled, as soon as he reached his own room, by hearing that a lady wanted to see him.

"A lady to see me !" he cried. "Who the deuce can it be ?"

In order to solve the difficulty, he went downstairs again.

A lady was standing near the doorway, her face shrouded in a thick black veil made of Maltese lace.

"I beg your pardon," said Jack, "do you want to see me ? My name is Harkaway."

"Have you forgotten me ?" replied the lady, in a low, agitated voice.

Jack started as he heard the tones.

He knew them well.

They were soft, sweet, melodious.

"Miss Manasses, I think," he said coldly.

"You used to call me Hilda," she said, with her eyes still cast down.

"Allow me to ask you one question," said Jack.

"Certainly."

"Do you know your father was here just now ?"

"Yes."

"Do you know his motive for calling upon me ?"

"Yes," she replied again, timidly.

"Then let me tell you," cried Jack, "that I must refuse to hold any conversation with you."

"Why ?" she asked, raising her eyes to his for the first time.

"Do you really want to know ?"

There was more than a slight tinge of sarcasm in his tone.

This seemed to fire her, and she replied more boldly—

"You think me unmaidenly ; you fancy that I have come on the same errand, is it not so ?"

"I admit it. What other construction can I put on your visit?" he said.

"You do not know me, Mr. Harkaway," she cried, trembling violently either with passion or emotion.

"Possibly not."

"I am not the woman to beg for any man's love. Unhappily you are acquainted with my secret. I do love you; it is an admission that wrings my heart. Let us forget it for ever."

"Willingly, as far as I am concerned," replied Jack, who, nevertheless, could not help feeling some compassion for the lovely girl before him.

"Shall I tell you why I am here?" she continued.

"If you please."

"To give you your freedom."

"What!" cried Jack, his eyes almost starting from his head.

"I have some money of my own; it was left me by an uncle," she went on, in a hurried tone. "You want to row to-day; this disappointment and confinement are killing you. Very well. I have paid the money for which my father holds you a prisoner, and you can go away when you like."

A sort of mist swam before Jack's eyes.

He did not expect this.

It was so noble, so disinterested.

He could scarcely believe that what he heard was the truth.

If it was true, he would have time to get to Putney, to replace Franklin, and to row after all.

His first impulse was to squeeze Hilda by the hand, leave the gaol, jump into a hansom, tell the man to drive "like mad," and be off.

Looking at his watch, he saw it was just half-past twelve.

"Heaps of time," he muttered. "They don't start till four."

"Good-bye, Mr. Harkaway," said Hilda, softly.

Her voice recalled him to himself.

"How can I thank you," he replied, "for your noble generosity?"

"By trying to think less unkindly of me in future."

"I ought to be kicked for what I said; I deserve it," he cried.

"Please recollect what I am going to say," she continued ; "possibly we may never meet again. Beware of three men."

"Their names?"

"They are called Kemp, Davis, and Hunston, and they have sworn to ruin you. This is their plot ; my father is not so much to blame. What he did was for my sake."

"I knew it," replied Jack.

"Farewell for ever," said Hilda.

"No," cried Jack ; "at least we may be friends."

"It is impossible. We cannot meet after this."

"But the money you have paid for me, and which I owe you?"

"Is a gift if you will accept it," she answered.

"Will you not incur your father's displeasure?" he asked.

"I can not help that. It was a matter of duty with me to release you ; I have done so. Good-morning. Please let me go now."

Jack involuntarily raised her neatly-gloved hand to his lips and kissed it.

"I am for ever your debtor," he said.

She smiled incredulously.

"You will soon forget me," she exclaimed, "and perhaps I shall be where all are forgotten before long. The grave holds few friendships. Once more farewell, Mr. Harkaway."

She would not allow him to say any more, but hurriedly left the room.

He stood rooted to the spot like one in a dream.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE RACE.

It seemed so strange to Jack that he should be able to row in the grand race after all.

In order to make sure, he summoned one of the officials of the prison, and asked him to inquire if he was really at liberty.

The official returned in a few moments, saying that he

was informed an order had come up from the sheriff of Middlesex to say that the money was paid.

"You've made a short stay, sir," concluded the warder. "Shall you go at once?"

"Yes," replied Jack, curtly.

"Ah! most gents do. Would you like to be shaved, sir, before you start? There's a nice barber round the corner, and a public not far off, if you prefer a drink."

"Is there?" answered Jack. "Can you go and order me a rump steak and a pint of porter?"

"Yes, sir."

"Quick, then. Get what you like for yourself. There's half-a-crown for you. Come for me when it's ready."

The warder started, and Jack walked up and down the yard.

He could have jumped for joy.

The only drawback to his happiness was that he owed his liberty to Hilda.

He might repay her the money some day, but he could never repay her in the way she wanted.

How well she had behaved, and how differently to her father!

While he was pacing up and down, a well-known voice exclaimed—

"Ha! Mast' Jack, how um do, sare?"

Monday stood before him.

"Why, you enterprising rascal, how did you find me out here?" cried Jack, shaking the black by the hand.

"Monday him come up to see the big race, sare; him save um money, and he come."

"Well?"

"Him go to Putney and ask for Mast' Jack; they say him ill. Monday shake him head, and then Mist' Carden him say Mist' Harkaway in prison."

"That's true enough," replied Jack, looking round upon the high walls and gloomy buildings.

They had, however, lost all their terror for him now.

"Then," continued Monday, "Mist' Carden him nice gentleman, and he say it only for debt. So Monday got twenty pounds him saved and he bring to Mist' Jack to get him out of um prison."

"You're a good-hearted fellow, Monday," said Jack,

much affected at this proof of his servant's kindness.
 "But it is all right now—the money's paid."

"Paid!" replied Monday. "Mast' Jack going away from um prison?"

"Yes, directly."

"And going to row in the big race?"

"I hope so. I'll have a try for it, anyhow."

Monday immediately did a war-dance in the exercise ground, to the great astonishment of the prisoners.

"That will do, Monday," said Jack.

"Hurrah! Mast' Jack, we lick 'em yet," replied Monday, joyfully, grinning all over his face.

"Go outside and call a hansom. I shall be with you directly," said Jack.

Monday went out, and presently the warder returned, saying the steak was ready.

Jack felt that he must keep himself up, though he had no appetite.

He had eaten nothing for nearly twenty-four hours.

"A man cannot row a long race on an empty stomach, or directly after eating," he thought. "It would be best to eat at once."

The steak was soon consumed, and, jumping into the cab, with Monday by his side, he said to the driver—

"Go as quickly as you can to Putney. Drive like mad. You can have a sovereign for your trouble, if you lose no time."

"Right, sir," replied the man, thinking he would like such a fare every day.

It was a little past two when the cab drove up to the hotel where the Oxford crew were staying.

Telling Monday to pay the driver, Jack sprang out and bounded upstairs.

The crew were just thinking of going down to the boat-house.

Carden was giving them a few final instructions.

Jack heard him say—

"Now mind, all of you, that you don't try to do too much at first; don't quicken on the stroke and force the pace; pull well through the water, and leave the rest to the coxswain and me."

When Jack entered the room a general exclamation of "Harkaway!" broke out.

Had a ghost made its appearance amongst them, there could not have been more surprise exhibited.

"Can it be you?" exclaimed Carden. "We thought you were laid up in Limbo."

"The money's paid," replied Jack, "and here I am."

"Can you row? Are you fit?" asked everybody.

"Never was better," answered Jack.

Franklin felt some disappointment at not being able to stay in the boat, but, like a good-natured, gentlemanly fellow as he was he did not show it.

"For my part," he said, "I am delighted to see Mr. Harkaway."

"If the captain wishes to retain you, my dear fellow," said Jack, "I shall not say a word."

"No, no," was the general cry; "we must have Harkaway."

"Yes," replied Carden. "He's our best man. I don't say it out of disparagement to anybody, but, for the sake of Oxford, we must have him. Have you fed?"

"Splendidly; had a point steak only an hour ago. I could struggle with a glass of beer," said Jack.

"You shall have it. By Jove! this puts new pluck into one," replied Carden.

The crew crowded round Jack and congratulated him heartily.

We must leave them while they are getting ready, in order to visit the river side, which presented an extraordinary spectacle.

The weather, though cold, was lovely.

Vast crowds had assembled on both sides of the river, all along the course.

It was difficult to say whether Barnes or Putney was most favoured by spectators.

Ladies in broughams and carriages, some wearing Oxford, others wearing Cambridge colours, had taken up favourable positions.

Gentlemen, tradesmen, clerks, and even boys were there in thousands.

University men greeted one another in the streets.

About three a rumour began to circulate that Harkaway, who rowed seven, was in the boat again.

This was ridiculed by most.

But some averred that he had been seen in the boat-house trying his stretcher.

The rumor flew to Barnes, where, on a barge, were standing Davis and Kemp.

A bookmaker came up and said to Davis—

“I should advise you to hedge.”

“Why?” asked both Davis and Kemp in a breath.

“You’re standing Cambridge, aren’t you?”

“Yes.”

“Well, Harkaway’s got well, and he’s to row in his old place—number seven.”

“Tell that to the marines. It won’t do for able-bodied sailors like us,” answered Davis, with an incredulous smile.

“All right. I only tell you what they say. The news has just come from Putney,” said the betting man, walking away.

“Tell anyone who says so it’s a confounded lie. We know better than that,” shouted Kemp after him.

“How people do get up these inventions,” remarked Davis to his friend.

“Don’t they? We know very well that Harkaway is tied hand and foot in the gaol. It’s only an hour since I saw old Mo’ Manasses.”

“Harkaway row, indeed! Not he.”

“Not much chance,” said Kemp.

They both laughed at the stupidity of the bare idea.

It was so very improbable as to verge on the impossible.

They were satisfied.

It was not likely they were going to change a halfpenny on their books.

They stood to win largely by the triumph of Cambridge, which in the absence of Harkaway, they considered a certainty for the rival university.

They would also lose very heavily, but that did not trouble them, as they fancied they were on the right side.

The pulses of the spectators beat quicker as the hour of four approached.

In a short time it would be all over.

The water Derby for that year would have been lost and won.

Flags of the gayest colours floated from all possible points.

The sides of the river and the bridges were black with human beings.

By three o'clock the Thames police had cleared the course.

The steamers allowed to accompany the race, including the umpire's boat and that of the press, had got their steam up and were lying behind the aqueduct.

As the time for the start approached the wildest enthusiasm prevailed.

A change had taken place in the betting, which was now even.

The Oxford crew were the first to take the water, and were well cheered.

A few minutes afterwards Cambridge appeared and were also received with cheers of a deafening description.

Tom Carden won the toss, and selected the Middlesex station.

Exactly at ten minutes past four an excellent start was made.

Cambridge dashed off with the lead in a most plucky manner.

They were rowing forty-six strokes a minute, which was a tremendous pace to go at.

And they looked like staying, for a finer set of men, though apparently, in the eyes of good judges, a little overtrained, could not be wished for.

Tom Carden only pulled forty-two per minute, but it was a long, telling, powerful stroke.

At the "Duke's Head," and past Simmons' boat-house, the Cantabs kept the lead.

It was estimated that they were more than half a length ahead.

They increased this going up the Reach, and the shouts of "Cambridge! Cambridge!" were deafening and continuous.

At the Point they continued to lead, and drew clear.

The Oxford coxswain cleverly avoided their wash, and steering splendidly, did not show by the movement of a muscle of his face that he was annoyed at being behind.

Suddenly he said—

"Now, my lads, spurt her! send her along! That's your style!"

Carden rowing stroke, and Harkaway seven, laid them



"IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE STRUGGLE WOULD FINISH AT CHISWICK."
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selves down to their work, like the broad-backed giants they were.

The stroke quickened into forty-four a minute, and the boat, answering well to the call, forged ahead.

This spurt was answered by their opponents, and a ding-dong race ensued, the Oxford overlapping the Cambridge, who were getting a little wild.

Now the steerer of the Cantabs endeavoured to take the Oxford water, but fearing a foul, which was imminent, he gave up the intention.

It was noticed that he began to steer badly, as if he was getting nervous.

Norman, however, the Oxford coxswain, was as cool as a cucumber in July.

Instead of shooting in for the dummy at Hammersmith, Cambridge kept the middle of the river.

This was a mistake.

Carden crept up at the "Crab Tree," and at the Soap Works had gained a material advantage.

It was clear that the struggle would be practically finished at Chiswick.

Half a length ahead Cambridge passed under Hammersmith Bridge in eight minutes and a half.

"Only half a length," muttered Norman.

Tom Carden nodded, and setting his teeth together, leant over his stretcher with a will.

At that juncture no man in the boat was doing better work than Jack.

He seemed to lift the boat every time he pulled his oar through the water.

Harvey was on the bridge, and he cried out—

"Bravo, Jack! Stick to it like bricks, old boy!"

The Cambridge crew made a desperate spurt, and still rowing forty-six strokes, they drew themselves clear.

Slowly, but with the certainty of fate, the Oxonians collared them.

It was impossible to shake them off.

At the bottom of Chiswick Eyot they were level.

Once more a ding-dong race ensued, which drove the crowd at this point wild with excitement.

"Spurt her again!" said Norman. "Now or never, Tom. ~~Left~~ her, Oxford. Bravo! well done, stroke and seven. Stick to them. Oh! well rowed, well rowed, indeed, seven!"

Norman declared afterwards that he had never before seen such splendid rowing as Jack's.

The muscles on his arms stood out like tightened cords.

He moved backwards and forwards like a machine.

And such a machine !

He was equal to three men.

The treatment he had received from his enemies seemed to lend him supernatural strength.

At last Tom Carden's length of stroke, and the gallant efforts of Oxford, told in their favour.

In the middle of the Eyot they were half a length ahead.

At the top they were clear.

"Easy, all," said Norman, not wishing to distress his men.

The Cambridge forty-six had come down now to forty-two, whilst Oxford rowed forty still, keeping the lead without apparent exertion.

The two styles were marked now.

Each had settled down to their work, and the pace was what Norman called a "stinger."

Oxford rowed in her old form, sharp off the chest, like a billiard ball from a cushion, a slow massive swing forward, oars, perfect in time and feather, dropped into the water like hammers and whipped clean through, while the water covered no more than the blades.

Cambridge, on the other hand, were dead in recovering from the chest, with a hurried swing forward, blade rather deep, and drag through the water.

Davis was looking through a field-glass.

His hand fell, and in a startled voice he exclaimed—

"Oxford leads !"

"The deuce she does ! That's a bad job ! Give me the glass," said Kemp, who cared more for his dirty money than the honour of the university.

"You're right," he continued in a short time. "But who on earth is that fellow slogging away at seven ?"

"I can't tell," replied Davis, absently.

Swiftly the boats crept up, though it seemed an age to the conspirators.

Oxford was still ahead, and holding their opponents well in hand.

"By heaven, it's Harkaway !" cried Kemp, as the eight passed them.

"Can't be!" answered Davis. "Why, my dear fellow, he's locked up."

"I tell you it is. Can't you see him? There is no mistaking the brute."

"How did he get out?" said Davis.

"How can I tell any more than you?" answered Kemp, angrily.

"It's a case of stump with us, that's all I know. I'm in deeper than I care about."

"So am I. You'll have to lend me a few hundreds."

"See you hanged first!" said Davis. "You shouldn't bet if you can't pay."

While this amiable pair were wrangling together, the race was being rowed out.

Oxford reached the "Ship" at Mortlake clever and easy winners by six lengths.

It was a splendid race, and occupied only twenty-two minutes six seconds.

"Hurrah!" cried Norman, relaxing for the first time.

"Back water, bow, and three. Easy, all."

A great sob burst from Jack, as his head drooped a little.

The pace had been tremendous, and it had told upon him, as well as on the rest of the crew.

Tom Carden turned to him, and said—

"Harkaway, I'm obliged to you."

"What for?" asked Jack, faintly.

"You've won this race."

"Nonsense. I'll own I'm a bit baked; but I've done no more than the rest of you," replied Jack, modestly.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MOLE'S DISCOVERY.

WE will pass over the cheers of the crowd, the flattering notices in the papers.

We will not dwell upon the champagne cup passed lovingly from hand to hand, the dinner in the evening, or the enthusiasm of Oxford on the return of her heroes.

We say nothing about the congratulations of Jack's

friends, the delight of Mr. and Mrs. Bedington, and the raptures of little Emily.

It is enough that Jack had done his work, and done it so well as to gain the applause of all.

"Pass your examinations as well, and beat your opponents as you beat Cambridge, and I shall be more than satisfied," said his father.

"I'll have a try," answered Jack, smiling.

"And avoid the fast set," said his mother.

"That's more difficult than winning a race," thought Jack.

He only stopped two days in town.

When he returned to Oxford, he found everything going on very much as usual.

He avoided the Corn Market for fear he might see Hilda.

For Moses Manasses he now cared little, as the debt was paid.

Harvey came into his rooms after breakfast, and greeted him warmly.

"You did that well, Jack. I saw you at Hammer-smith. Splendid race just about there," he exclaimed.

"Cut the shop and tell me what's the news," answered Jack.

"Mole's got a new sensation on."

"Has he? What's that?"

"Why, he was walking to Iffley, and in a ditch he found a piece of old stone, on which is what he called a Runic inscription."

"How did he get into the ditch, and what's Runic?" asked Jack.

"He says he was botanising," replied Harvey.

"Humbug! Tight, you mean," laughed Jack.

"Not at all unlikely. Anyhow, he found this wonderful stone, which he says is Runic, and that means relating to northern antiquities."

"Oh! something ancient."

"Awfully. It's over a thousand years old, he swears. He's taken the opinion of the dons upon it, and it is to be formally presented to the Bodleian."

"Where is it? I should like to see it."

"All right. He's left it in my rooms; come and look at it," replied Harvey

Jack did so, and, lying on the table, he saw something that looked like a piece broken off an old tombstone.

On it was roughly carved these words—

“Drun. Kasaf. Iddler.”

A peculiar smile stole over Jack's countenance.

“That's Runic; is it?” he cried.

“So they all say.”

“What a lark!” cried Jack.

“Why, what are you laughing at?” asked Harvey, curiously.

“One night last term,” said Jack, “Dawson and I were coming home from Sandford in the trap, and we very nearly ran over a drunken man this side of Iffley.”

“What has that to do with Mole?”

“I am coming to it. The fellow was a stonemason, and he had his tools in a bag, and a large stone, which one of our wheels broke in half.”

“I begin to see,” said Harvey.

“We got out, put him in the ditch to keep him out of harm's way, and Dawson said, ‘Let's write something on his stone.’”

“Did you?”

“Yes, I did,” replied Jack. “This is the very identical stone. I wrote what you see on it, and chucked it into the ditch after him. It was a soft sort of stone, and the chisel did it easily.”

“What did you write?”

“Just what you see!” answered Jack, still smiling.

“But what does it mean? I can't make anything out of ‘Drun. Kasaf. Iddler.’”

“Read it differently, and leave out the stops.”

Harvey looked at it again, but was still in the dark.

“Don't you see, stupid?” cried Jack.

“No, bother me if I can,” replied Harvey, scratching his head.

“Well, I'll be another Daniel. Wasn't it Daniel who read the writing on the wall?”

“Some Scripture swell. Say it was Daniel; it doesn't matter.”

“You needn't scratch your head, Dick. Take 'em as they come,” exclaimed Jack.

“Don't rile me. Tell me what the Ru—what is it?—Runic inscription really does mean?”

"Simply 'Drunk as a fiddler.' Don't you see? 'Drun. Kasaf. Iddler,' read properly will make 'drunk as a fiddler.'"

Harvey burst into a roar of laughter.

"Mole's sold again," he exclaimed.

"Wasn't it a proper thing to write on the cove's stone under the circs.?"

"Of course it was."

There was a knock at the door, and Mr. Mole came in.

"Ah!" he cried, "looking at my stone? What do you think of it, Harkaway?"

"Grand discovery, sir," replied Jack.

"I should say so. They will make me a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries; that will be F. S. A. Then I should like to belong to the Philosophical Society—F. Ph. S.; also the Society of Arts—F. S. A. In fact, it will open the doors of all the learned societies to me."

"You ought to add F. A. S. S., sir."

"Why, may I ask? I never heard of it. What does it mean?"

"A double S, sir, used to spell donkey," replied Jack.

"I am in no humour for chaff; I have a soul above that. Think of my glorious discovery. How it carries the mind back centuries, when the inhabitants of this country were rude and barbarous!" said Mr. Mole, rubbing his hands.

"I'm sorry to undeceive you, sir, but that stone is no relic."

"Not a relic?" cried Mole, in dismay.

"No, Dawson and I did it."

"Did what?"

Jack told him what he had related to Harvey, and explained that "Drun. Kasaf. Iddler." meant simply "Drunk as a fiddler."

Mole turned white, red, blue, green, and yellow.

He gasped for breath, he reeled in his chair, and nearly fainted.

"Oh, Lord!" he exclaimed. "When does the next train start for Liverpool? I must emigrate; I shall be off somewhere. Why was I born?"

"To make people laugh, I should say, sir," answered Jack.

"Get me a Bradshaw. Oxford shall know me no more," cried the unhappy man.

"Don't take on, sir. No one knows the secret but Dawson, Harvey, and I. We won't split," said Jack.

"You won't really," replied Mole, brightening up, "on the word of a man?"

Mr. Mole rose, and throwing himself on Jack's shoulder, wept for joy.

"Why those weeps?" cried Jack, adding, "That will do, sir. I can't stand too much of it. Stash it."

Mole reseated himself.

"I will keep up the imposition, and may yet be famous," he said. "I will not leave Oxford, which is so dear to me; but after the talking monkey, the exposure of my valued stone as a sham would have broken my heart."

Mr. Mole went away considerably crestfallen, but taking his Runic stone with him nevertheless.

He did not present it to the Bodleian.

It remained in his house, and provoked keen discussion among the dons and his pupils for many years afterwards.

Jack kept his secret, and no one ever learnt the true origin of the ancient relic, as it was called.

Some said the inscription was Chaldean, others that it was Syriac; and others held that it must be Phœnician.

This shows how easily learned men may be deceived.

Soon after this affair Fabian Hall returned to Oxford with his father.

He had entirely recovered from his wound, and as Jack was glad to see him, they were often together.

Sometimes they played cricket in Cowley Marsh, at others they took a gentle canter on Bullingdon.

The elder Mr. Hall was highly indignant at the outrage which had been perpetrated on his son.

He blamed the police for their remissness in not finding out the assassin.

Although the affair was nearly forgotten, he persisted in offering a large reward for the discovery of the would-be murderer.

"I am not afraid of being attacked again," said Fabian one day, as he and Jack were taking a walk in the country, "because it was you the fellow intended to kill."

"No doubt of that, but I don't feel nervous," answered Jack, "though I am glad I escaped."

"Have you ever seen the one-armed man since?"

"Yes, once."

"You know who he is?" asked Fabian.

"Perfectly well; an old enemy of mine, named Hunston. If I had any proof that he was the man, I would put the police on his track, but I have only suspicion. It was so dark at the time I could not swear to him."

"Did you try to find him?"

"No. His time will come; he will be trying something on again, and I'm ready for him now," replied Jack.

"In what way?"

Jack put his hand in his pocket, and produced a piece of iron, with holes for the fingers to go through.

"This fits on the hand," he said; "it is called a knuckle-duster. If I were attacked again, I should use it."

"What a formidable-looking thing," said Fabian; "it would smash a man's skull in, wouldn't it?"

"If you hit hard enough," replied Jack, with a laugh. "At night I always put one hand in my pocket, slip my fingers into the knuckle-duster, and I am ready for the villain."

It came on heavily to rain.

"We shall get wet," said Fabian; "can't we turn in somewhere?"

"There is a small wayside pub. a little higher up," answered Jack; "what do you say to that?"

"No, thanks. I don't like public houses as a rule, and I must not get wet, so I will go back to college, please; the doctor says I must be careful," replied Fabian Hall.

"Very well," replied Jack; "you shall do as you like. I mean to turn in here."

"Good-bye," said Hall, putting up his umbrella, and toddling off on his way home.

"Stroll on," said Jack, who had not gone half a dozen paces before he saw Dawson coming along at a good four miles an hour."

"Hullo, Dawson!" he cried.

"Doing a constitutional, my boy," cried Dawson. "Got cobwebs in the brain. Too much whisky last night, and now, when I take a ten-miler for my health, it comes on to rain. Like my beastly luck."

"Turn into this pub. with me," said Jack.

"Don't mind if I do. Lead the way," replied Dawson. Jack was delighted to have met with a companion.

In a few minutes they reached the tavern, and entered.

It was a low-looking, tumble-down beer-shop, with a poor, miserable, weak-looking landlady behind the bar.

"Have you a room with a fire, where we can sit down till the rain is over, missis?" asked Jack.

"There's the parlour on your right," answered the landlady in a wheezy voice, "you can go in there if you like; there are some gentlemen there already."

"Bring in two mugs of Oxford, and there is sixpence," said Jack.

He pushed the door open, and found himself in a small room, with beer-stained table and benches.

A thick pall of tobacco-smoke hung over the narrow, ill-ventilated apartment.

Through the mist Jack made out the forms of three men sitting round the fire.

They turned their heads as he entered.

One was saying—

"I tell you he has beaten us at every turn. Can't we hit upon something new? Your idea is——"

"Hush!" said the one next to the speaker.

Jack uttered a low whistle.

The three men by the fire were Davis, Kemp and Hunston.

That they were talking of him he did not doubt.

It was strange that he should, with Sir Sydney Dawson, intrude upon them in such a place and at such a time.

His first impulse was to retire.

But, after a moment's consideration, he felt ashamed of such a course.

The landlady brought in the beer and placed it on the table.

Jack took a seat, as did Dawson, who was rather surprised.

"Do you see who those men are?" he whispered hastily.

"Yes," said Jack, coolly.

"Are you not afraid?" said Sir Sydney, in an agitated manner.

"Not much. I never saw the man I was afraid of yet," said Jack.

He proceeded leisurely to fill and light his pipe.

Then he sipped his ale, and stared insolently at his three enemies.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE FIGHT AT THE ROADSIDE INN.

As Harkaway turned round and saw Kemp, Davis, and Hunston sitting together in the roadside tavern into which he and his friend, Sir Sydney Dawson, had accidentally entered, his enemies saw him.

The recognition was mutual.

It seemed like going into an hornets' nest.

The odds were against him, and in spite of his natural bravery he could not help feeling uncomfortable.

Sir Sydney, however, became cool and radiant.

"Gentlemen," he said, with a sarcastic emphasis, "driven by stress of weather to take refuge in an hotel—I think I may dignify this place of refreshment with the title of hotel, since it has had the honour to receive us—we have made our way into this room, which we wish to keep strictly private; therefore you will at once see the necessity for your going away."

"Are you speaking to me?" asked Davis, with an insolent stare.

"I don't know you," answered Sir Sydney; "but my remark was decidedly addressed to you and your companions."

"You can see that we are university men by our caps and gowns," continued Davis.

"Two of you are so, I presume; the third is an outsider. I mean the party who hasn't his proper number of limbs; cove with one arm, in fact," answered Dawson.

"That is Hunston," whispered Jack.

"Isn't Hunston the man who tried to kill you and hurt Hall?" asked Sir Sydney, in the same tone.

"Yes; my enemy; the fellow who is in league with Kemp and Davis to do me all the harm he can; the man, as you say, who tried to murder me, and nearly killed poor Fabian Hall."

Sir Sydney Dawson indulged in a long whistle.

"Are you fond of music?" inquired Davis, with a smile.

"What's that to you?" was the reply.

"Only this : if you call whistling music I don't, and if you want to do it again, you had better go outside and amuse yourself."

"Cheeky beast !" exclaimed Jack, angrily.

"My good sir," replied Sir Sydney, "I shall continue to amuse myself when and how I think fit, without availing myself of your kind advice. If you do not like my music, you can go somewhere else, as I told you just now. Your room is more agreeable than your company."

"It seems to me," said Kemp, chiming in with the conversation, "that we were here first."

"What of that ?"

"It gives us a right and title to the room."

"Which I dispute."

"Dispute it as much as you like," continued Kemp.

"We are here, and we mean to stop."

"Indeed !"

"If anyone goes, it will be your friend Mr. Harkaway and yourself."

"On any other occasion I should agree with you, because we object to the company of blacklegs and murderers," replied Dawson, calmly.

Hunston trembled visibly under his dark complexion.

Kemp and Davis were livid with rage, and bit their lips with annoyance.

"You shall answer for this language," exclaimed Kemp.

"I will horsewhip you within an inch of your life," exclaimed Davis.

As for Hunston, he leant over the fire and said nothing.

But the fingers of his remaining hand twitched nervously, and his lips were screwed tightly together.

He knew he was not much use in a fight.

The cruel, but well-deserved shot delivered by Harkaway, which had deprived him of his arm, had prevented him from being a match in a fair stand-up battle with any man.

All he could do was to stab in the dark.

That was his only resource.

Nor did he shrink from the commission of crime to gratify his passion for revenge upon Jack, which had existed for such a long time in his cowardly mind.

"My good men," exclaimed Sir Sydney, "it comes to

this—if you don't go out of this room, I shall be compelled to make you."

No one stirred.

"Make an exception in Mr. Hunston's favour?" put in Jack. "I want to have a word or two with him. I shan't be happy if I don't."

"By all means. Let the confederate blacklegs retire, and the would-be murderer remain," replied Sir Sydney, lighting a cigar.

"This is too much," cried Davis, furiously. "We are two to two, for a one-armed man does not count——"

"Unless he has a knife," said Jack.

"Anyhow, we will fight before we go."

"As you please," answered Dawson.

"What do you say, Kemp?" said Davis.

"I'm game for any mortal thing," replied Kemp; "the fact is I can't stand this man's insults."

"Go away then. You have the remedy in your own hands," said Jack.

"Not for you or anybody like you."

Hunston got up from his chair.

He faced Sir Sydney Dawson and Harkaway.

There was a sullen scowl upon his brow.

A murderous expression sat upon his hang-dog face.

"Look here," he exclaimed, "I don't care for anybody or anything, that's my state of mind. Don't any of you rile me further, for I've got a revolver in my pocket, and when I'm overriled, I'm apt to go on the shoot."

"On or off the shoot, I'm not afraid of you," replied Jack.

"Clear out," continued Hunston.

Neither of the two friends moved.

Hunston's hand sought his pocket, and he produced a pistol.

It had seven chambers.

A patent seven-chambered central fire revolver is not the thing to be laughed at.

"Clear out," he exclaimed again.

Taking up a pint pewter pot Jack threw it at Hunston, and succeeded in hitting him on the arm.

The pistol fell to the ground without exploding.

In an instant Harkaway and Dawson precipitated themselves upon Kemp and Davis.

A short struggle ensued.

Blows were freely given and exchanged.

At length Kemp and Davis were lying on their backs in the passage.

Harkaway and his friend were masters of the field.

Hunston had retreated, picking up his revolver, and joined his friends outside.

Kicking the door to, Sir Sydney exclaimed, with a laugh—

“That was easily managed.”

“We told them what they had to expect if they wouldn’t go,” answered Jack.

“The brutes,” cried Dawson. “It’s a wonder to me how such fellows are allowed to stay in the university.”

“No one takes the trouble to expose them ; that is how it is.”

“Amongst a number of men there will always be a few black sheep.”

“I suppose so,” answered Jack. “They are not pleasant, though.”

“There we agree,” said Sir Sydney. “What do you say to some more beer after our tussle?”

“I’ll order some,” Jack said, going to the door.

He tried to open it, but in vain.

The key had been left outside, and it was turned in the lock.

Davis and his companion had locked them in.

“We’re in a state of siege,” said Jack, with a blank look.

“How is that?” asked Dawson.

“We’re locked in.”

“Nonsense.”

“It’s a fact, though ; we are.”

Sir Sydney looked round him, and saw a bell rope.

“Hooroosh !” he cried. “Here’s a bell, and if they won’t answer that, I can see a way out through the window.”

He rang the bell violently.

Once, twice, three times.

Nobody came.

“This is a rummy-go state of things,” he said. “Can I not take mine ease at mine inn, as Falstaff says, without being annoyed in this way?”

He went to the door, and put his lips to the keyhole.

"What ho!" he exclaimed, "within there. Beer, I say. Bring me the foaming goblet, or I'll know the reason why. What ho, varlets!"

Then turning to Jack, he continued—

"That's how they used to talk to them in the olden times, isn't it?"

"Never having lived in the olden times, can't say?" replied Jack.

"But it tells you so in books."

"Bother books," said Jack. "What's to be done to get out of this?"

As he spoke, a shot was fired through the window.

The crashing of the glass mingled with the noise of the explosion and the cries of the widow woman who kept the house.

The latter seemed to be expostulating with some one.

"This is getting hot," said Jack, with a grim smile.

"Too hot to last," replied Dawson, uneasily.

"I don't see the fun of being baited like a rat in a trap."

"Nor I. This precious Hunston friend of yours combines the desperation of a California digger with the pleasing ferocity of a Whitechapel garotter."

"I see him," exclaimed Jack.

Suddenly he darted to the window, threw it up, and jumped into the road.

There was a sharp but brief struggle.

The next moment Sir Sydney was startled by a fall of a heavy body at his feet.

The form of Hunston lay still and motionless.

Before he could recover from his astonishment, Jack reappeared, and climbed into the room.

He closed the window again and approached the fireplace.

"What is the meaning of this?" asked Dawson. "Do you usually chuck people about in this way?"

"I have captured a prisoner, that's all."

"Who is it?"

"Hunston."

"Bravo, our side! we've got the man 'on the shoot when he's riled,' that's something. What shall we do with him? Roast him over a slow fire," said Sir Sydney.

"Let him stay where he is for the present. He won't move yet awhile, I'll lay my life."

"Why not?"

"Because I gave him a sockdollager under the ear, which will keep him quiet."

"About time to do something of the sort, when a man goes on the shoot," said Sir Sydney.

"Didn't the bullet whistle close to us?"

"Rather too close to be pleasant."

Hunston, during this conversation, breathed heavily, but did not show any signs of consciousness.

CHAPTER XXX.

HUNSTON'S ESCAPE.

THERE was no sign that those outside were willing to open the door.

On the contrary, a dead silence reigned, which seemed to show that Kemp and Davis had prevailed upon the landlady to remain quiet, and that they did not know Hunston had been captured by Harkaway's raid through the window, which was a mode of egress of which they apparently did not think.

Probably they thought Hunston had made off.

In a short time the man opened his eyes and staggered to his feet, looking wildly about him.

"What are you going to do with me?" he asked.

Sir Sydney Dawson was about to speak, when Jack interrupted him, saying—

"Leave him to me, please. He's my prisoner."

"Certainly, if you wish it."

"You and I are old enemies, Mr. Hunston," continued Jack.

"That's stale news," replied Hunston, bitterly. "In the old days, when I had both my arms, you would not have found it so easy to throw me through the window as you did to-day. But you were always a coward!"

"I think not," answered Jack. "Anyhow, you were always a liar and a coward too!"

"What's your game?" Hunston inquired impatiently.

"I mean to hand you over to the police."

"On what charge?"

"That of stabbing Mr. Fabian Hall."

"I didn't do it," cried Hunston.

"You will have to prove that in evidence on the trial. I shall be the principal witness against you."

"Nonsense; you can't convict."

"I'll have a try, at all events," replied Jack. "Why do you keep coming continually in my way?"

Hunston was silent.

"I have no wish to hurt you," continued Jack. "Have you no means of getting a decent living? Must you always be the hired servant of Kemp and Davis, and do their dirty work?"

"If you make enemies I can't help their running you down," replied Hunston.

"Very well. When we meet with a noxious reptile, we stamp him out, and that's what I'll do to you," said Jack, in a tone of decision.

"I dare say you would like to do it, but you can't. You have no proof. I am a man of the world, and know my way about as well as most people. You can't frighten me as you would a child."

It was growing dark, and the embers in the grate burned with a dull red glare, casting weird shadows upon the wall and floor.

Jack's mind was carried back to his schooldays, and to the time when he, Hunston, Harvey, and Maple, were, with Mr. Mole, cast upon a desert island.

"If I were to allow you to go," said he, "would you promise to let me alone in future, and try to be a respectable member of society? Have I ever done you any real harm?"

"Yes."

"When?" asked Jack.

"Oh, lots of times. You always triumphed over me at school. And look at this."

He pointed to the stump of his arm.

"Is this nothing?"

"All your own fault. Cry a go now, and take your hook. I'll lend you a fiver to start with, if you want money, and that is more than your friend Kemp would do for you."

"You are something like the donkey who was on the bank of a river," replied Hunston.

"What about him?"

"He saw a truss of hay on the other side, and there was no bridge to go over by, and he could not swim, yet he wanted the hay. What did he do?"

"I give it up," answered Jack.

"That's just what the other stupid ass did," replied Hunston, with a harsh laugh, "and it is what you will have to do with me. You know it, or you wouldn't come soaping me over to keep me quiet."

"You are an ungrateful vagabond!" broke in Sir Sydney Dawson, "and if I were Harkaway, I would lock you up, and chance it."

Hunston stared rudely at him.

"Possibly you would," he said at length.

"Why do you say possibly?"

"Because you look fool enough for anything."

"By Jove! it's lucky you have only one arm!" cried Sir Sydney. "If you had two, I'd thrash you within an inch of your life."

"Or get a thrashing yourself, which is much more likely. Just get out of the way of that door, please."

"What for?"

"You'll see, if you live long enough."

As he spoke he rushed at the door, and hit the lock with his foot, throwing all his force into the shock, so that the fastening, which was never a very good one, gave way, and the door flew open.

"That's what you ought to have done at first," he said, with a chuckle.

"Stop him!" cried Sir Sydney.

"What's the use?" said Jack.

"I suppose you know your own affairs best, but if it were my case, I would soon settle a fellow like that."

"How?—in what way?" said Jack.

"Well, I don't know exactly," replied Sir Sydney, looking puzzled. "Lock him up, I suppose."

"Then I could not convict him. I have only suspicion to go upon, and no witnesses. The man is as well aware of that as I am," said Jack.

"What did you threaten him for then?"

"Out of bounce. I wanted to square him, because I am afraid of him."

"So am I," answered Sir Sydney, with a shudder. "I

never saw such a rascally mug in my life as that fellow has. Come back to college."

"I'm ready."

When they got into the passage, the landlady met them with tears in her eyes.

"What's the row with you, mother?" asked Sir Sydney.

"Oh, sir," sobbed the old woman, "what am I to do? There's the door broken, and some glasses smashed, and the gentlemen have had a sight o' beer, and gone away without paying for it."

"What's that to do with us. "There is sixpence for what we had."

"You are Oxford gentlemen, sir, and I'm sure you will see a poor, lone widow righted."

She wiped her eyes with the corner of her handkerchief. The appeal was irresistible.

"Possibly we had something to do with it," said the free and open-hearted baronet. "There is half a sovereign for you. Will that do?"

"Heaven bless you, sir, and have you in its keeping. You're the real gentleman, you are, and I'll pray for you this night. May the saints protect you."

"You're an Irishwoman, I should imagine," said Jack.

"Shure I'm that same, sir, and small blame to me, seeing I was born in the County Cork, and couldn't help meself."

The young men laughed, and wishing her good-day, walked back to St. Aldate's.

As they passed the "Mitre," they saw Hunston standing in the doorway talking to the Duke of Woodstock.

When the duke and Hunston saw they were perceived, they hastily withdrew into the coffee-room.

"Well, I'll be shot if I ever saw anything like that," said Harkaway.

"Nor I. There is some mischief in the wind now, I'll bet a new hat," replied Dawson.

"The duke and Hunston together! Wonders will never cease. Ought not Woodstock to be told what sort of a fellow has got hold of him?"

"Tell him if you like."

"I will, by Jove!" exclaimed Jack.

"If you do you will get no thanks for it."

"Why?"

"Because it is some plot or other."

"I'll risk being snubbed. Come in with me."

"No, thanks," replied Sir Sydney, with a shrug of the shoulders. "I don't care about being mixed up in other people's business. You know the old saying 'Those who in quarrels interpose, must often wipe a bloody nose.' Excuse me, will you?"

"All right. When I ask you to do anything again, you may tell me of it," replied Jack, flushing angrily.

Sir Sydney tucked up his gown, and went down the Corn Market to buy something in a shop, where there was a pretty girl with whom he had no objection to flirt for half an hour.

Jack strode into the "Mitre," arching his big broad back like an angry cat, and plunging his hands deep down into his breeches pockets.

The sole occupants of the coffee-room on the left-hand side happened at that moment to be the Duke of Woodstock and Hunston.

"You are sure you can get hold of her?" said the duke earnestly, as Jack crossed the threshold.

"Did I ever say I could do a thing when I couldn't?" was the reply.

Though Jack was ashamed of listening at any time, he could not help standing still for a moment.

"I wanted a shrewd fellow to do my business," continued Woodstock, "and that is why I spoke to Kemp about the matter. Kemp is wather unscwupulous, you know, and—aw—excuse me—I thought if any one could introduce—you know—aw——"

"A scoundrel, my lord duke. That's what you wanted to say, is it not?" put in Hunston.

"Aw, yaas; something like it. Take a joke, eh?"

"It is no joke. I am an outcast from society, or, as you say, Mr. Kemp would not have introduced me to your grace. But do you know one thing?"

"Aw—know great many things, but may not know the particular thing," said the duke, stroking his tawny moustache.

"The man who has been the curse of my life is Jack Harkaway."

"Indeed—aw! Good wider, Harkaway; only know

him as a good wider. Beat my animal; did, indeed. Give you my word. He beat him in—aw—vewy good style; fact, indeed.”

“You will have nothing to grumble at, your grace, if you trust this affair to me.”

“Don’t tell Kemp. Not to be trusted, Kemp. Get the girl safe, but say nothing; aw—understand?” said the duke.

“Perfectly.”

“And now, suppose you are like the rest of them—aw?”

“How’s that, my lord?”

“You want—aw—a little on account.”

“Money is always useful, and I should not object to a bit on account, as you put it,” replied Hunston.

Jack was utterly at a loss to make head or tail of this conversation, but he thought it time to step forward.

Who the girl was, what Hunston was to do with her, and why the duke should pay him for some villany, was a mystery.

Stepping forward, he exclaimed—

“Can I speak to you, Woodstock?”

The duke turned round abruptly, and placing a small gold glass in his eye, stared at him curiously.

Jack bit his lips with vexation.

“Mr. Harkaway of St. Aldate’s, I think?” he said.

“Yes.”

“You called me, aw—Woodstock, I think?”

“I did.”

“Aw—pardon me, but I’m only Woodstock to my friends. Hope you will be good enough to remember that in future—aw.”

“I’ll call you anything you like, from Julius Cæsar to Judias Iscariot,” replied Jack, impatiently. chafing under his foppish and affected manner, “but I want you to listen to what I have to say.”

“Can’t you put it in—aw—witing?”

“If you mean writing, I cannot. I want to warn you against the man you are with.”

“Thanks,” replied the duke, “but it is—aw—perfectly unnecessary. It is indeed.”

“He is a villain.”

“Yaas, said the duke with a pleasant smile.

"A bigger scoundrel was never born to be hung."

"Glad to hear it, I am shaw. Vewy glad indeed—heard all this before and that's the—aw—weason I have sent for him. Gweat villain, is he?"

"I have told you so," replied Jack.

"Vewy good, indeed; thank you. I shall not hesitate to employ him now. Your recommendation goes a great way; does weally. Thank you, Mr.—aw—bad memory for names."

"Then you do not mind being seen with a fellow of that description," exclaimed Jack.

"Not in the least. Oh, deaw no, Mr.—aw—what's your name. Wather like it."

Turning on his heel Jack walked away indignantly.

There was no man in Oxford who could snub any one with such ready ease as the Duke of Woodstock.

Hunston's derisive laughter grated unpleasantly in his ears as he left the "Mitre," and wended his way moodily back to college.

When he reached his rooms he wanted some tea, but neither his scout nor Monday was to be found.

"It's very odd that I can't get any attendance," he growled.

Putting the kettle on the fire himself, he sat by it while it boiled, and wondered what his enemies would do next.

To his great relief Harvey came in.

"Hullo, Dick!" he exclaimed.

"What cheer, my hearty?" replied Harvey.

"Nothing very great. I've been upset."

"Who has ventured to disturb your highness's serenity?"

"First of all, I have a row with Kemp, Davis and Hunston."

"Hunston?"

"Yes, then I get snubbed by the Duke of Woodstock for trying to do him a kindness, and after that I come in to tea, and can't get a confounded thing done. Neither Monday nor the scout is to be seen."

"I think I can explain Monday's absence," said Harvey.

"How?"

"A man told me he saw the Black Prince in the Christ-Church meadows, and that he was talking in an excited manner to Buster and that wretch of mine, Clinker. I

rather fancy they want to do him some harm, and I came to you to tell you what my suspicions were."

"Oh, bother Monday, bother everything. If he can't take his own part, he must put up with what he gets," replied Jack.

"Won't you protect your pet nigger?"

"I have other things to think of."

"Come with me. They may chuck Monday into the river. If you won't protect him, I will," exclaimed Harvey.

Very reluctantly Jack yielded to his friend's solicitations, and leaving his tea unmade, went through the inner quad of St. Aldate's to the broad walk.

Here they met Mr. Mole.

"Ha, my dear boys!" exclaimed Mr. Mole. "I am pleased to see you. In my busy, and I may say fertile brain, I am resolving a knotty problem."

"So am I, sir," replied Jack.

"Name it. If I can assist you, count upon my help."

"Look here, sir. It's rather difficult."

"Never mind that. Did difficulties frighten Euclid? Name it."

"If my cousin's sixteenth child is my father's own mother, then what relation does St. Paul's Cathedral bear to the Bank of England, and why should apples be more than two penny in Billingsgate on a Sunday?"

Mr. Mole smiled a ghastly smile.

"That's not Euclid," he replied, "neither is it Colenso. You are making sport of me, Harkaway."

"Not I, sir. Wouldn't do such a thing," replied Jack.

"Never mind; let the young heart be blithe and gay. Whither away in such a hurry?"

"To the river, sir. Our scouts have got hold of Monday and we want to rescue him," replied Harvey.

"Indeed! I am with you in such a laudable enterprise. Lead on, we will scatter those scouts in some confusion."

"Make haste, sir," replied Jack. "I fancy I hear him."

"Did I ever fail you in the hour of danger?" asked Mr. Mole.

"Never, sir."

"Nor will I now. Lead on; I repeat—lead on. Isaac Mole never yet deserted a friend."

The three walked hastily towards the Isis.
As they neared the river's bank, a voice raised in distress was distinctly audible.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE SCOUT'S REVENGE.

THE two scouts, Buster and Clinker might have had many differences of opinion.

No doubt they had.

But they thoroughly agreed in one thing.

This was their hatred and detestation of Monday, the faithful black whom Jack had brought with him from abroad.

They had been longing to have their revenge upon him.

They waited for an opportunity.

It came at last.

Monday went for a walk in the Christ-Church meadows, and, while wandering along the shady banks of the Cherwell, was confronted by the two scouts, arm in arm.

"Ha! Mr. Buster, how um do, sare?" exclaimed Monday.

The scout favoured him with a scowl.

"I'm not going to pass the time of day with the likes of you," answered Buster.

"No more ain't I," exclaimed Clinker, with a contemptuous glance.

"Go on um way, then; there plenty room," replied Monday.

"We shall go on when we choose, and not before, it is not our rule to be dictated to by blacks."

"Blacks in this country ought to be sweeping crossings with a broom; that's all they are fit for," remarked Clinker, with scorn.

"You come to Limbi. There you look as funny in your white skin as I look in mine over here. What is the difference, sare? Mans is all the same under um skin," replied Monday.

"Is he? That's a matter of opinion. Do you remember prodding of me with a long spear thing?" said Buster.

Monday burst out laughing.

"You get into um coal bunk, and then you come out black as me," he answered.

"I wonder if water would do him any good?" said Clinker, looking at the Cherwell.

"Might try a wash, anyhow," replied Buster, taking the hint.

"Look out for yourself, Mr. Blackamoor. Can you swim?" continued Clinker.

"Swim? What um mean?"

"You are going into that river, and it will teach you, I hope, not to run so cheeky 'n future."

"An Oxford scout is a gentleman, and not to be hinked by Moors of Venice," observed Buster, drawing himself up proudly, and thinking dimly, not to say vaguely, of some representation he had seen of Othello.

"Put um in the water!" exclaimed Monday in alarm. "No, um won't. Mind um eye, dirty English thief scout mans."

As he spoke he began to dance about in an excited manner.

Though he might have been an adept with spears and bows, he did not understand the noble art of self-defence.

Buster and Clinker squared up to him with the right hand well up under the chin, and the left ready for hitting.

"Look how he puts up his dukes!" said Buster, alluding to the unscientific manner in which Monday doubled his fists.

"There's one in the tater trap!" exclaimed Clinker, making Monday's teeth rattle.

"There's ditto on the conk; reg'lar stunning nose-ender. Let him have it, Mr. Clinker."

"With the greatest animosity, Mr. Buster, sir. There's a toe-biter for the black scoundrel," answered Clinker.

Thus encouraging one another, they pummelled into Monday until his face began to assume the exaggerated proportions of an ugly and ill-formed turnip or mangold wurzel.

Suddenly abandoning his tactics, Monday ran his head into Buster's stomach, depriving that somewhat fat individual of what little wind he had left.

Then he placed his hand under his right thigh, and

with a jerk which would have delighted a Cornish wrestler, threw him over his back into the Cherwell.

"Help ! help !" cried the wretched scout, whose ideas of swimming were rather imperfect.

Clinker was astonished at this unexpected turn of affairs.

He could scarcely believe the evidence of his senses.

Running to the bank, he peered into the water.

Buster was just visible above the surface.

"Mr. Buster, sir," he exclaimed, "for Heaven's sake hold yourself up. Be brave, sir ; but if you sink, I will be a witness that you were brutally murdered."

"Get the drags, you fool !" answered Buster.

"The drags ! Certainly ; but I'm a witness——"

"I'm a-sinking ! "

"I'll have him hanged for your murder ; I will indeed, Mr. Buster. And much as I shall regret you, sir," continued Clinker, "I will undertake the care of two of the bests sets of rooms you've got."

"Don't stand a-jawing. I'm going fast. Help ! Help !" roared Buster.

"My good sir, let me entreat you to be calm," said Clinker.

"G-get the d-drags," said Buster, his mouth filling with water.

"Try a hymn. It's a peaceful thing is a hymn."

"Hymns b-be-h-hanged ! Have you got a r-rope ? "

"For shame, sir. You should die in peace. Try the first verse of the 'Christian Soldier.' Oh ! what's that ? Dear me ! it's all over with both of us."

Clinker's canting was cut short by Monday, who gathered himself together for another effort.

Retiring some distance he took a run.

Lifting up his foot, he kicked Clinker cleanly into the Cherwell, and the two scouts were struggling together in the river.

A grim smile overspread Buster's face when he saw that he was joined by Clinker.

"I like the black for that," he thought.

It is pleasant to have a companion in misfortune.

The bank was rather steep, but a fallen tree offered a place to hold on by, and Clinker in his desperation, seized this.

Buster, with a last effort, grasped his brother scout.

They raised their voices and roared for help. Monday executed a war-dance on the pathway. Then he sang a song of triumph. It was one of the favorite melodies of his native land. At this juncture, Jack and Harvey arrived on the scene of action.

"What's all this about, eh, Monday?" asked Jack.

"Um beastly scouts, sir. Gone to the debbel. All drown in the water. Ugh! Monday kill all scouts in Oxford!"

"Go back to college at once. Cut and run, or you will get into trouble," exclaimed Jack.

Monday hesitated.

"Be off now," continued Jack.

Obedying his master, Monday ran off, and Jack, leaning over the bank, gave his hand to the discomfited scouts, and safely landed them.

They were dripping with water.

Their appearance resembled that of drowned rats.

Shaking with cold and trembling with fear, they presented a ludicrous appearance.

"You're a nice couple of beauties," said Jack. "What do you mean by allowing a poor black to put you in the river?"

"No, sir, begging your pardon," said Buster; "we can't admit that."

"How was it then?"

"We fell in, sir."

"Oh, did you? That's funny," replied Jack, with difficulty refraining from laughing.

"I happeal to Mr. Clinker, sir, if we did not fall in. He would scorn a huntruth, sir," continued Buster.

"It don't matter, nothing don't matter now," sighed Clinker. "I've been and gone and got kicked into the Cherwell by a savage heathen, and I shall never hold hup my head no more."

"Come along and change your things," whispered Buster. "Don't let on like that, or we shall be chaffed through the college. It's all a bit if the other scouts get hold of it."

Clinker took his friend's arm, and they walked quickly away together.

Jack and Harvey were much amused.

"I don't think they had the best of Monday that journey," said Jack.

"Perhaps they will let him alone in future. Wasn't Buster a study? As for Clinker, his heart seemed broken," answered Harvey.

"It's nearly time for hall," said Jack, looking at his watch.

"Yes," said Harvey, "let's make haste back."

"I want to write half a dozen lines first. I'll meet you in hall. Good-bye for the present," said Jack.

They parted, and Jack wrote his letter.

"Take this to the post, Monday," he said, as Buster had not shown up.

"Yes, sare," answered Monday, who was on his best behaviour at all times, when in the presence of his master.

"Take the Bishop with you. Why, where is Soapy Sam? A run will do him good, but I don't see the beggar."

He looked round for the monkey, who was not to be seen.

"The monkey, him run out, sare, Monday think."

"What makes you think so?"

"Cos when me come back, the door open."

"What a nuisance! he's up to so many tricks, you can't tell where he will go, or what he will do. Never mind. Cut off to the post. Recollect too, that I have a wine to-night, and both you and Buster will have to make yourselves handy. My friends are coming at eight. You took all the cards out, I suppose?"

"Yes, sare, and the wine, him all come," replied Monday.

"That will do then. Cut it!"

Jack went to hall, wondering what on earth had become of the monkey, and what mischief would result from his escape.

That evening he gave his first wine.

As a freshman in his first term, he could not give a wine party, but now he was out of training and in his second term, he resolved to do the thing in style, and return the hospitality of those friends who had invited him during his early residence in the university.

CHAPTER XXXII.

SOAPY SAM IS UP TO HIS TRICKS.

DINNER in hall proceeded very satisfactorily until it was half over.

At the dean's table, at the upper end of St. Aldate's Hall, was an excellent leg of mutton.

Suddenly something jumped on to the back of the dean's chair.

It jumped over plates and dishes, and seizing the mutton, bore it away in triumph.

Mr. Scraper, the unpopular tutor, who was screwed up in Jack's first term, saw the daring theft.

"It is a monkey!" he exclaimed.

"Who does the animal belong to!" inquired the dean.

"Mr. Harkaway, I believe, sir."

"Dear me! this is very improper. I remember now. The creature once appeared in chapel, and burlesqued the pulpit with his presence."

"I should expel him from the university, sir," said a tutor.

"Rusticate him for a year," remarked another don.

"Shy something at him," suggested a young bachelor of arts.

The suggestion of the B. A. was received with acclamation.

There was no dearth of provisions.

Yet the loss of the leg of mutton seemed a sacrilege under the circumstances.

"By Jove, Harkaway!" said Sir Sydney across the table at the lower end of the hall, where they sat.

"There's a row on up there."

"What is it?"

"The Bishop's collared a leg of mutton. How did he get in?"

"Confound the brute!" said Jack. "I missed him, and knew he would turn up inconveniently somewhere."

"Look at him! look at him!" cried a dozen voices.

With a skill of which only a monkey could be capable,

he climbed up the front of one of the priceless pictures at the end of the hall.

It was a Vandyke.

The value of the painting was immense, and grease from the meat would not do it any good.

Great excitement prevailed.

The dons stood up and regarded the audacious intruder with curiosity not unmixed with indignation.

Getting on the top of the frame, the Bishop sat still and chattered away at an immense rate.

Evidently he thought he had done a very clever thing.

The B. A. who had suggested throwing something at him, took up a piece of household bread and sent it towards the monkey.

In an instant dozens of bits of bread found their way from all parts of hall to Soapy Sam.

The bread-shower came like hail round his head.

But it descended upon the heads of the dean and his attendant dons.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen!" cried the dean. "I beg of you to remember where you are."

Another volley of bread followed this speech.

"The paintings, gentlemen, are of priceless value. They are historical paintings," he continued.

A shout of derisive laughter greeted him.

The monkey had to be dislodged, and the undergraduates meant to do it.

The mutinous spirit in St. Aldate's was becoming aroused.

During his residence at Oxford the Prince of Wales had been a member of St. Aldate's.

The monkey, finding the fire rather hotter than he liked, moved his quarters to a painting representing the prince in his academical robes.

Again the shower of bread, this time mingled with potatoes, rained upon the picture.

"Take care of the prince, gentlemen," shouted the dean.

The prince, however, tottered in his frame.

Loud shouts of laughter broke from many a throat.

The monkey was becoming angry.

He raised the leg of mutton threateningly.

"I will preserve order," exclaimed the dean furiously.

"Gentlemen, hear me. I will have discipline maintained, or I will perish in the attempt."

All at once Soapy Sam let the mutton fall.

It came with a crash on the head of the dean, who sank down under the table half stunned.

"He has perished in the attempt," observed Sir Sydney. "We shall have to mourn for our dean."

In a moment, however, the dean reappeared.

An awful frown sat on his classic brow.

Forgetful of his dignity, he seized the leg of mutton and threw it at the monkey.

The shot was a bad one.

It only hit the prince in the eye.

Jack came to the rescue, and with a well-directed piece of bread, struck the monkey on the head.

The creature instantly left his perch, and made his exit through the half-open door, regaining his master's rooms with a sagacity peculiar to himself.

"Mr. Harkaway," exclaimed the dean, recovering himself, "you are indirectly responsible for this outrage upon decency."

"Very sorry, I'm sure, sir," replied Jack.

"Sorrow befits the occasion, but we must go farther than that. The monkey must be—a—discommensed."

He smiled slightly at the joke.

"I will get Mr. Mole to take care of him, and once out of the precincts of the college, I hope you will consider justice satisfied," said Jack.

"With that promise, I rest content," replied the dean. "Gentlemen, proceed with your dinner."

Amid much laughter and merry conversation the meal was continued, and every one talked about Harkaway's monkey, who had done more in half an hour to upset the college authorities and render them ridiculous, than the last set had been able to accomplish in three years.

The monkey was sent off by Monday to Mr. Mole, who volunteered to take charge of it until Jack could find it a home.

Then the wrath of the dean was appeased.

In the evening all Jack's friends turned up at his room.

Towards the close of the evening, cigars and wine had taken an effect upon some of the guests.

They became uproarious and wanted to burn the

statue of the founder which stood in the inner quad of St. Aldate's.

While Jack was trying to prevent any excess, Monday brought him a message that Manasses, the Jew, wanted to see him.

To Monday's message from Manasses Jack replied—

"Tell him I'm engaged. Can't he come to-morrow?"

"Him say, sare, he not keep you two minit," replied Monday.

Turning to his friends, Jack exclaimed—

"Excuse me, will you, you fellows? A man wants to see me."

"Some dun, I'll lay odds," exclaimed Sir Sydney.

"Smother him. Put him in the fountain. Sit upon him," cried the fast men in chorus.

"If it is a dun, I will deliver him into your hands," answered Jack; "only let me see him first."

In the outer room he found the Jew awaiting him.

By the light of a solitary candle which burned on the table, Jack saw that the Israelite was sorely troubled.

There was a haggard expression about his eyes, and a look of suffering sat upon his patriarchal countenance.

The noise of revelry in the adjoining apartment grated harshly upon his ears.

It afforded a strange contrast to the sad and worn appearance of the rich Jew of the Corn Market.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Manasses?" asked Jack, a little coldly, remembering the treatment he had received on the day of the boat-race.

"Mr. Harkaway," said the Jew, "I have come to you, because I think my daughter has some claim upon your gratitude."

"If it is the old story, I have nothing to say to you."

"No, no! Holy Abraham! that dream is over, and the poor girl knows it. Yet it is of her I would speak."

"What have you to say?" demanded Jack, curiously.

"Not two hours ago my daughter was carried off."

"Carried off!" repeated Jack, in surprise.

"Yes. I have received information from one who was passing at the time. Hilda went for a walk. In the road she was seized by a man who had only one arm."

"One arm!" cried Jack, in astonishment.

"Ha! you know him. Can my suspicions be cor-

rect?" exclaimed the Jew, adding, "Oh, sir, as you are a Christian gentleman, restore to me my child!"

Jack was silent.

He was thinking of Hunston.

He was thinking, also, of the conversation he had partially overheard between the Duke of Woodstock and Hunston in the coffee-room of the "Mitre Hotel," when he had been so curtly dismissed.

Could the duke have employed Hunston to carry off the girl?

Misconstruing his silence, the Jew continued—

"If you have done this thing, may the Lord pardon and forgive you your sin, for I never can."

"I give you my word," said Jack, "that I have had nothing to do with it."

"You may despise her because she was a Jewess, and you may have taken advantage of her weakness, because you knew that she loved you."

"I tell you you are mistaken."

"She was my ewe lamb, the flower of our flock, and the child of my old age, Sir. Think of her misery and my wretchedness," pursued the Jew.

"Tell me all you know," answered Jack, earnestly, "and if I can find out the perpetrators of the outrage, I will."

"My informant saw her forced into a carriage, and she was quickly driven away in the direction of Abingdon, before he could interfere."

"Was the one-armed man with her?"

"He was. May the seven plagues of Egypt alight upon his accursed head!"

"Leave the matter in my hands, but at the same time warn the police. I think I can do something for you," said Jack.

"My money-bags are at your service. I will add another thousand to that my daughter paid for you, but bring her back to me pure as she went away," exclaimed the Jew, clasping his hands.

"I don't want your money. An idea has passed through my head. I may be wrong, but I think I can find Hilda."

"How?"

"Because I know the one-armed man you speak about."

"Is he a friend of yours?" asked the Jew, again eyeing him suspiciously.

"On the contrary. He is my constant and determined enemy."

"Once you saved her life, Mr. Harkaway; this time, do more than that, save her honour, and I swear to you that you shall be my heir jointly with her. I swear it on the laws that Moses brought down from the mountain of Sinai."

Jack was about to answer him, when the door opened, and a crowd of undergraduates broke into the room.

Some carried candles and lamps, some held half-empty bottles in their hands.

All were noisy and uproarious, ready for any mischief and full of devilment.

Directly they saw the Jew, they raised a great cry.

"A Jew! a Jew!" cried one.

"Moses Manasses, by Jove!" said another.

"He discounted my paper," exclaimed a third, "at seventy per cent."

"What does he mean by disturbing Harkaway's wine?" said a young lord. "Is this the time to call for money, you old goat?"

"S'help me Heaven," cried the Jew, talking excitedly, "I never asked for money. He owsh me none."

"Out with him. Bait the Jew," said Sir Sydney Dawson.

"Hurrah! A Jew bait! a Jew bait!" cried a dozen voices in chorus.

"Shentlemen, shentlemen, what would you do?" asked the Jew, in abject terror.

"Duck him in the fountain," cried Lord Tollington, a youngster of nineteen with more money than brains.

A dozen willing hands seized the Jew.

"Mister Harkaway, you will help me!" said Manasses, wildly struggling with his assailants.

Jack did not like to have a row and hit his guests in his own rooms.

He did not know what to do.

As the Jew was being dragged to the staircase, and his plaintive cries reached his ears, he put his scruples on one side.

Dashing forward he hit out right and left.

Several men rolled over.

"I'm with you, my boy," said a voice at his elbow.

Looking hastily round, he saw it was Tom Carden.

The captain was looking very fierce and determined.

"Set your back to mine," he exclaimed. "We'll pull through. They are all drunk."

"Right you are," replied Jack.

The men were not at all averse to a fight, and they turned against Carden and Jack.

The Jew, seeing his opportunity, slipped down, and doubling under his captors, slipped down the stairs as fast as his aged limbs would permit him.

"Stole away, stole away! Hark for'ard. Gone away. Tally ho!" exclaimed Lord Tollington.

"After him, my boys," cried Sir Sydney, who was rather unsteady on his legs.

In an instant, the men who had been fighting abandoned that amusement and tore after Manasses.

They caught him in the quad.

"Make haste," said Tom Carden, wiping his nose, which was bleeding.

"I'll follow you," replied Jack, putting his cold knuckles, in his left eye, which was beginning to swell and burn.

They made their way down the staircase and into the quad.

It was time.

Manasses was again struggling in the midst of a yelling mob of undergraduates.

They were close to the fountain.

In another moment he would have been plunged into its chilling water.

"Let him go," cried Carden. "Do you call yourselves men?"

"You shan't do it," said Jack.

Lord Tollington turned round.

"You can't stop us, my dear fellow," he replied. "We'll just duck this son of Israel, and then we will come back and finish your wine."

"Oh, Moses! oh, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob! what a day thish ish," moaned the Jew. "Oh! Father Abraham, save me from the hands of these Philistines."

"Pitch in," said Carden.

Jack did not want telling twice.

He let fly at the man nearest him, who happened to be Lord Tollington, rolling him over and over.

Another and another followed.

The captain was equally successful.

Two such men as Jack and Carden were a power not to be despised.

The best men in the " 'varsity eight," they were worth a dozen others.

In a short time they had dispersed their assailants.

Moses Manasses was standing, with his face bruised and his clothes torn, bemoaning his fate.

"Run," said Jack, "run, I tell you. They'll come on again directly. You don't know university men as well as I do."

Thus advised the Jew ran for his life.

He made his escape.

Lord Tollington picked himself up, and came to Jack and Carden, who were standing together, panting.

"Are you not pretty well ashamed of yourself, my lord?" said Carden.

"Well, I don't know," answered his lordship. "It was only a lark, and I think you have pummelled me nicely."

"Serve you right."

"I shouldn't have cared if that Jew beast had not escaped."

"Is a man to be attacked and bullied, half killed, in fact, because he is a Jew?" asked Jack.

"Perhaps some men like Jews' daughters; I've heard the chaff," answered Tollington.

Jack's temper was up.

At hearing this, he rushed upon his lordship, put his hand under his thigh, lifting him up, bent his neck back with his other arm till he nearly broke it, and pitched him head and heels into the fountain.

"That will teach you to keep a civil tongue in your head, my boy," he said, coolly.

His lordship struggled in the water for some time, and got out, shaking his fist at Jack.

"You shall hear from me," he said.

"As soon as you like."

"Will you fight a duel?"

"Go to bed, and talk in the morning," replied Jack.

"I'll challenge you, you low cad," continued his lordship.

Jack turned contemptuously on his heel, and taking Carden's arm, made his way back to his rooms.

"What did he mean by challenging me?" asked he.

"Why, fighting a duel," said Carden.

"Do fellows fight duels here?"

"I never heard of it. It is murder if you kill a man in a duel, that's the law ; but you can go over to France."

"He's a double-distilled ass," said Jack.

"So I think," replied the captain.

Most of the men who had pursued Manasses returned to their rooms, feeling ashamed of themselves and not liking to return to the wine.

Those who had remained in Harkaway's rooms were those who were too tipsy to join in the Jew bait.

They had amused themselves in various congenial ways.

One found a clock on the mantelpiece which was in the shape of a hollow globe.

The works did not take up much room, so he filled the hole up with old port.

Another discovered three pairs of dress boots.

Into these he, with drunken gravity, emptied a bottle of claret.

A third tried to see how much wine a new hat would hold.

While a fourth went into the scout's room, and obtaining a can of paraffin oil, began to water the carpet with it to lay the dust.

Some others piled all the chairs on the table, and made feeble efforts to set fire to them, thinking it was the fifth of November, and there ought to be a bonfire.

In the midst of this havoc and confusion, Jack entered with Carden.

He had seen a little misrule at the university, especially in St. Aldate's, but he was not prepared for this.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE CHALLENGE.

HARKAWAY had been accustomed to some wild scenes during his life, but the confusion that reigned in his room baffled all his experience.

Half a dozen men were standing on chairs, making speeches one against the other.

They fancied they were at the "Union," taking part in a debate.

Others again singing songs and joining in choruses with a heartiness that made a sort of small Babel or confusion of tongues.

The effect was something like this—

"I say, sir, and I will repeat it again and again with all the emphasis that such an important subject demands, that William Ewart Gladstone is"—"The mere slave of the Tory party, for"—"Many have told of the monks of old, what a jovial crew were they; for they laughed ha! ha! and they quaffed"—"Wine, sir, is the root of all evil. If there were no wines at this university, Oxford would be,"—"The worst place in the world for a man to go to. I have no hesitation in saying that London is a sink of iniquity, in which revel"—"The bishops of the church are the defenders of the faith, and he of Oxford—I mean the immortal Wilberforce, has truly said"—"Champagne Charlie is my name," etc., *ad lib.*

Other men again were doing their little worst to Jack's property.

It seemed to be their object to destroy everything they could lay their hands on.

One was making cigarettes by tearing leaves out of his "Livy."

Another was cutting strips of cloth out of his dressing-gown, and putting them over the chimney of the lamp to burn.

A third had the poker red-hot in the fire, and was now and again burning holes in the carpet.

A fourth was breaking all the crockery in the cupboard with the tongs.

The man laughed idiotically at each smash.

"I say, Carden," exclaimed Jack, "I can't stand this."

"It's rather neat, isn't it?" said Carden, laughing.

"Help me to clear the room, will you?"

"Think of the laws of hospitality, my dear fellow."

"That be hanged; think of my belongings."

"Very well. How shall we begin?" said Carden.

"Chuck them out, one by one."

"All right. Pitch in. I'll start with the poker cove. You'll want a new carpet to-morrow."

"Bother the carpet," said Jack, seizing a man who was boring a hole in the cushion of a chair with a fruit-knife.

He soon dragged him to the door and deposited him on the landing.

Then he went back for another.

He passed Carden on the way, who carried two—one in each hand.

The men were too far gone to show fight, and took their expulsion very quietly.

In about ten minutes the room was cleared.

The oak was sported.

Jack looked round dismally on the scene of devastation.

Ruined furniture, broken mirrors, cracked glasses, smashed crockery met his gaze everywhere.

The men outside began to kick at the door and to vociferate loudly.

"Kick away, you beauties, you don't come in here," said Carden, with a quiet smile.

"No; I'm jiggered if they do," said Jack.

"What do you think of your first wine?"

"Not much, I can tell you. My first shall be my last," said Jack.

"St. Aldate's is coming to something," remarked Carden. "We have the reputation of being the fastest college in Oxford, and by Jove, we are trying to deserve our designation."

"Haven't they made a clean sweep of it, that's all."

"Rather. I never saw such havoc. It's awful," said Carden, adding, "Where did you get your stuff from?"

"My wine? Oh, it's some of the most expensive I could buy."

"That is it. Youngsters' nuts are not up to swell

wine, and the result of your extravagance is a smash-up. Hark at the beggars. What a row they are making."

"Can't we duck them, or something?" asked Jack.

"Let's try. I'll open the oak while you send a pail of water over them."

"Suppose they storm the castle, and get in again?"

"They shan't do that," said Carden. "I'll guard the door."

Jack saw a large pail of dirty water, left by the scout, after washing up some things.

Seizing it in his vigorous grasp, and getting his hand well under the bottom, he followed Carden.

The door was opened and as quickly shut.

But, short as had been the interval, Jack had discharged the contents of the pail full in the face of a mob of howling men.

There was a rush backwards.

Then a renewed attack on the solid oak.

This was accompanied with naughty words and a fierce yelling.

"Fire away," said Jack, adding—

"Make yourself at home, old fellow, if you can. Shall you pitch here to-night? Better, perhaps, take the sofa; unless you prefer half my bed."

"No, thanks; the sofa will do for me. I can't stand sleeping double," said Carden. "It goes against the grain."

"All right. Will you have the bed?—and I'll take the rug."

"Don't put yourself out on my account. Give me a blanket, and I shall be as jolly as a sandboy in less than no time."

Jack speedily rugged him up on the sofa, and, by degrees the noisy men outside dispersed, retiring to their rooms.

In a short time both Harkaway and Carden were asleep.

They did not turn up at chapel in the morning.

That was no unusual occurrence with the fast set.

Monday and Buster groaned when they entered the room and saw the havoc that had been done.

The scout was used to that sort of thing.

He had seen what we may call several generations of university men.

As a rule, young men at Oxford are very much alike.

What is done in one man's time is done in another's.

So Buster set to work like a philosopher to put things straight.

He emptied the wine out of the boots and the clock, cleared away the remains of the orgie, turned the carpet, so that the burnt holes would not be seen, put the injured chair in the background, and in a couple of hours the room looked as if nothing extraordinary had happened,

At ten o'clock a very decent breakfast stood on the table, consisting of cold game, hot fish, Strasbourg patties, honey in the comb, tea and coffee, with other trifles.

Then he found some soda and brandy, which he gave first to Carden, who drank it eagerly.

"Did it hiss as it went down, Buster?" asked Carden.

"Didn't hear it, sir," said the scout.

"Is Mr. Harkaway up?"

"Not yet, sir. Soon make him show a leg."

He went as he spoke, with some more soda and brandy to his master, who speedily turned out of bed.

"Here, you Monday, Tuesday," cried Tom Carden, "bring me some soap and water, towels, etc. I suppose you haven't got a spare tub?"

"Only one, sare, and Mist' Harkaway him in it," replied Monday. "Hark how um splash about, sare."

In fact, Jack was in his bath, making a noise like a sportive porpoise.

Carden soon dressed himself, and was joined by Jack at the breakfast-table.

The London papers had just arrived, and were laid out on the table.

Everything was in excellent order.

"Wonderful man, Buster," exclaimed Jack. "He's cleared the wreck away in a marvellous manner."

"He's used to it. Aren't you, you old villain?" asked Carden.

"Ought to be by this time, sir," said Buster. "I've seen a few things in my time. Spent almost all my life in the 'varsity, but this here spree last night was a lick. Paté, sir?—yes, sir; all the way from Strasbourg, sir. Made of geese's livers, sir, they do say, and werry nice, too."

"What do you know about it, you vagabond? Shut up."

"Cert'ny sir. Don't presume to know more than you, sir."

"You old humbug, why, I'll bet that, in your wicked old heart, you are saying to yourself that you have forgotten twenty years ago more than I have ever known."

"Yes, sir, wouldn't like to contradict a gentleman like you, sir. 'Scuse me, sir, knock at the door."

"Answer it, then, and keep your confounded tongue quiet. You know I hate you."

The scout went to the door, and came back saying—

"Mr. Kemp, sir."

"Kemp?" repeated Jack.

"Yes, sir."

"Say I won't see him."

"He says he's come from Lord Tollington, sir."

"Tollington?" repeated Jack, adding to Carden, "wasn't he at my wine last night?"

"Of course he was. Don't you remember what happened?"

"Not much. I was so upset with the attack on Manasses, and the riot afterwards, I am rather fogged."

"You punched his head, or something."

"Oh, yes, I recollect now. Ask Mr. Kemp to be good enough to step in," said Jack.

Kemp entered, looking round him defiantly.

"Do you want me?" asked Jack.

"I suppose so, or I should not have called," replied Kemp.

"You needn't be insolent, my good fellow, or you will go out a deuced sight quicker than you came in."

"That depends upon circumstances. I wasn't drunk last night."

"Do you mean to say I was?" asked Jack.

"Draw what inference you like from my words. I come from Lord Tollington."

"What of that?"

"You will know directly, if you listen."

"Go ahead," said Jack.

"You insulted his lordship grossly last night and struck him."

"Very possibly. I am rather hazy about the affair, but if I did hit him, I'll lay six to four he deserved it."

"That is not the question. Lord Tollington has sent me to demand satisfaction."

"What?" exclaimed Jack.

"Satisfaction."

"Do you mean that he wants to fight a duel with me?"

"I do," answered Kemp.

"But duelling is illegal in this country."

"He is willing to chance that."

"Is he?" said Jack, thoughtfully.

"If you will not accept the challenge he has sent you by me, he says he will publicly horsewhip you, and brand you as a coward all over Oxford."

"Indeed!"

"You may sneer, but you would not like to have bills printed and posted everywhere advertising your cowardice," said Kemp.

"Perhaps you would post them?"

"I certainly should have no objection," replied Kemp coolly.

Jack stared at him in a puzzled sort of manner. At length he said—

"I am at breakfast now; would you have any objection to come back again in an hour?"

"Not at all. I will do so with pleasure."

"I will give you an answer then."

"All right. I am simply the friend of Lord Tollington, and have no wish to be disagreeable," said Kemp.

"Open the door for this gentleman," said Jack.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

NEGOTIATIONS.

"HERE'S a pretty go," said Jack.

"Well, what of it," replied Carden.

"Fellows go and kick up a row in my room, want to beat a poor old Jew. I punch one man's head, and I get a challenge to fight a duel."

"It isn't pleasant, certainly."

"Not at all."

"Shall you fight?"

"That's exactly what I want to ask you," replied Jack. "You have been up here longer than I, and you ought to know the manners and customs of the place and be able to advise me what to do."

"I must confess," said Carden, "that I never heard of men fighting duels. Oh! yes I did, though; a man shot another years ago and bolted to Spain. Tollington is a very proud fellow; he belongs to one of the oldest families in the Kingdom. Catholics I think they are, and he evidently means fighting."

"I should not like to be called a coward."

"The law would take your side. It is an offence to send a challenge; the police would have him up in no time."

"Can't stand police cases," said Jack; "they are low."

"Now I think of it, Tollington is reckoned a dead shot."

"Is he? I'm not a bad hand with a gun, but a pistol is a different thing."

"Tell you what I saw him do for a wager once," continued Carden. "He stuck a nine of diamonds on the wall and at twenty paces he hit each pip in succession."

"That's not bad; I'm in for it," replied Jack.

"Can you fence?" asked his friend.

"Yes."

"Well?"

"Pretty well. I know the passes, and can lunge in tierce or quarte, and all that sort of thing. They used to say I made rather pretty play with a sword," replied Jack.

"That's your sort then," cried Carden, gleefully.

"Tollington is not much of a fencer; I heard him say so once."

"But suppose his lordship chooses pistols?"

"He hasn't the choice according to all usage. You as the challenged may select your own weapon, provided it is something of a civilised nature."

"Hurrah!" cried Jack; "that will do. I shan't be made cold meat of this time."

"Leave it all to me. I will do the needful with you, and talk to Mr. Kemp."

"Will you be my second?"

"Of course I will; didn't I say so? I'll get the swords and everything, a couple of Toledos—beauties, I know where to spot just the pair of irons you will want."

"I shall be indebted to you all my life if you will manage the affair for me. As he has challenged me, I must fight, and I'm glad it is not with pistols, because there is less chance of killing one another with swords."

"So I think. Keep yourself quiet, and refer Kemp to me when he returns. I'll talk to him like a Dutch uncle," said Carden.

"Thanks, old boy; I shan't forget you."

"You'll pink this fighting sprig of nobility, and take some of the courage out of him."

As he spoke, Monday again ushered in Kemp.

"Am I too soon?" he asked.

"Not at all," replied Jack.

"Oh, I thought you looked as if you couldn't make your mind up whether to be shot or kicked," said Kemp, insolently.

"This language to me in my own rooms is unpardonable, Mr. Kemp," cried Jack; "and were you not a messenger from Lord Tollington, I should turn you out."

"An easy way of getting out of a difficulty," sneered Kemp.

"As it is," said Jack, advancing threateningly towards Kemp, "I shall request Lord Tollington to send me a gentleman next time, not a swindler."

To Jack's taunt Kemp replied—

"Thank you. You can have another duel on with me if Tollington doesn't settle you."

"I wouldn't go out with you."

"Really, gentlemen," exclaimed Carden, "I must interpose between you. Harkaway, you are wrong to take any notice of Mr. Kemp, and you, sir, have behaved in a scandalous manner, which I will take care is reported to your principal."

"Didn't mean anything," said Kemp, abashed at this reproof. "Mr. Harkaway never loses an opportunity of snacking at me."

"Be good enough to confine yourself to the business in hand."

"I suppose that's soon settled. You don't mean fight-

ing. It's against the law, and so on. I'd better go on to the saddler's and order Tollington a new whip."

Jack started from his chair, flushing angrily.

"By Jove! Carden," he cried, "this is more than I can stand. This fellow wants me to hit him."

Carden got between Jack and Kemp, keeping them apart.

"Do you refer Mr. Kemp to me, as your friend in this affair?" he said.

"I do."

"Then oblige me by sitting down while we negotiate."

Jack sat down in his chair again, lit his pipe, and smoked sullenly, while he glared savagely at Kemp, as if he would have liked to have half an hour's pounding at him.

"Now, Mr. Kemp," continued Carden, "I have the pleasure of informing you that Mr. Harkaway has accepted Lord Tollington's challenge."

"Really!" said Kemp, evidently surprised.

"Perhaps you both of you thought he would not listen to such a proposal. You are mistaken if that was your belief."

"Pistols, I suppose?"

"On the contrary! we have decided upon swords."

"But Tollington particularly wishes to use hair triggers," said Kemp.

"I cannot control his lordship's inclinations," answered Carden, blandly. "I presume, however, that you are aware the choice of weapons lies with my friend, Mr. Harkaway?"

"Why?"

"Because he is the party challenged."

"Very well; I suppose it is all right. Forge ahead."

"The place must be settled between you and me, as well as the time, etc."

"What do you propose?" said Kemp, who appeared considerably crestfallen at the turn affairs were taking.

"Place, a hayfield a mile or so out of Sandford, on the high road; there is a stack near the gate. Do you know it?"

"Yes, that will do."

"Time, six o'clock to-morrow morning," continued Carden.

"Very well," said Kemp.

"I will bring weapons, or you may do so. The swords, remember, must be measured, and be of an equal length."

"Do you think I would give Tollington a longer sword than Harkaway?" said Kemp, with assumed indignation.

"I don't say anything of the kind, but mistakes are possible, and I mean to guard against them," replied Carden, adding, "Is there any further matter that we can debate?"

"No; it's all settled."

"Keep it dark then. We don't want half Oxford looking on. Better bring a doctor with you, though."

"What for? You haven't killed my man already."

"No; but we mean to have a try for it," said Carden. "Besides, a doctor is useful to both parties. Will you bring one, or shall we?"

"We will," answered Kemp.

"That will do. As we shall not utter a word to a human being, we shall know, if spectators are present, or the police interfere, that it is from your side the information has come; understand that, if you please, Mr. Kemp."

"We mean fighting quite as much as you do," answered Kemp; "so you needn't flurry your fat about us splitting."

"Good-morning. Monday, open the door for this gentleman."

When Kemp was gone, Jack exclaimed—

"I can breathe again, now that vulgar brute is out of the room."

"So can I. Open the window; let us purify."

"Isn't it odd that when there is anything unpleasant going on with regard to myself, that fellow Kemp is sure to have a finger in the pie?"

"It is. He manages to get hold of one fellow after another. I heard he was working Lord Tollington, who is a freshman, and getting money out of him at billiards and by betting."

"Shouldn't wonder," said Jack, "if he put Tollington up to the idea of a duel."

"Very likely. Now look here, old man. I'll go and get the fencing irons, and we'll have a bout together. You must keep quiet. No excitement to-day, mind," said Carden.

"All right," answered Jack. "I don't want to kill my opponent, but I should like to give him a lesson."

"If you do kill him by an unlucky thrust, you will have to bolt abroad."

"Shall I?"

"Undoubtedly. Duelling is illegal. If a man kill another in a duel, the law says it is murder, and you will either be hanged or imprisoned for life."

"Nice prospect, that," replied Jack, with a sickly smile. "I begin to think I am in for a good thing."

"Deuced nasty uncomfortable thing; but you must pull through it somehow."

"I'm not funkng," Jack replied. "Only an affair of this sort makes one rather solemn."

He went for the swords, and returned in about half an hour with two beauties, light, delicate, well-tempered, and elastic as whalebone.

They immediately had a set-to, and Tom Carden expressed himself satisfied when, at the expiration of an hour, they left off.

"I learnt fencing when I was at Eton under Angelo, the best man in England," he answered.

"You fence well," said Jack, "and no mistake."

"Yes. I was considered a good hand at it. I won the foils in my year."

"I must really thank you for putting me up to several wrinkles," continued Jack. "That feint of yours in tierce, and the lunge afterwards, is splendid."

"Generally so considered. It lays your adversary open to you; and if you watch your opportunity, you cannot help spitting him through the right arm, near the shoulder-blade."

"In Germany, I believe, the students at the universities of Bonn, Heidelberg, Gottingen, etc., always settle their differences with the sword."

"Yes, but they only hit in the face. It is not fair to strike anywhere else, and that accounts for the hideous scars so many Germans have on their faces."

"Well," said Jack, "I look forward with hope to the future. Shall I make my will?"

"You've got nothing to leave, have you?"

"Not till the governor croaks. Oh, yes, there is the monkey," replied Jack, with a laugh.

"Let him take his chance, he's all safe with Mole."

"There is just this little portrait of Emily," said Jack ;
"the one in my locket. If anything should happen, give it to her, will you?"

"You are miles off being what doctors and undertakers call a stiff 'un," replied Carden. "But I'll think of it, if——"

He did not conclude the sentence.

Jack's life was in the hands of a merciful Providence.

Everything depended on the morrow, upon a cool head, and a steady hand.

He did not wish to frighten him.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE DUEL.

AFTER all, Jack went out to take a constitutional.

While he was gone for his walk, Harvey came to Carden's rooms, and found him indulging in black coffee and brandy, smoking a very big cigar, and lolling lazily upon a sofa.

"How do, Carden?" said Harvey. "Seen anything of Jack?"

"Yes ; he's gone for a stroll."

"Oh, I wondered where he was. Monday said he had not been in since hall, and couldn't make out where he had got to."

"Do you want him?"

"Well, yes, I do."

"Anything important?"

"To him it is."

"Well, then, postpone it till to-morrow morning to oblige me."

"Why?" asked Harvey.

"I have my reasons."

"Can't you tell a fellow?"

"No, not now. You will know all at breakfast-time to-morrow morning ; but what is the news?"

"Well, as you are so uncommunicative, I don't see why I should open my mouth any more than you."

"You are Harkaway's friend, are you not?"

"I hope so. We were schoolfellows together, and I don't suppose it is any secret that if it had not been for Jack's kindness, I should not be up at Oxford now."

"Very well, then; you must not excite him to-night."

"It's all very well to puzzle a man by talking in this enigmatical manner," replied Harvey, peevishly. "Can't you tell me what's on?"

"Can't you tell me? The thing cuts both ways."

"I won't speak unless you do."

"If you'll speak first, I'll enlighten you afterwards. Will that do, exacting beast?" replied Carden.

"All right. A servant has been over here from Oakley Wood."

"Where is that?"

"Oh, a few miles out of Oxford."

"Who lives there? I am in the dark."

"I thought you knew," said Harvey. "It is Mr. Travers's place, and Emily is governess there."

"Who is Emily?"

"Why, Jack's young lady. You call yourself a friend of Harkaway's, and you haven't heard of her."

"Perhaps I have. I may have forgotten; anyhow, I don't remember."

"Emily and Jack were engaged a long time ago, before we got wrecked in the China seas; he saved her from a lot of perils; her people are dead, and she has gone out as a governess rather than be dependent upon Jack's people. Now do you see?"

"Je twiggay—that is to say, I twig," said Carden.

"Well, Emily has suddenly disappeared, and no one knows where she has gone to."

"Der teuffel," exclaimed Carden, who seemed in the humour for making experiments in foreign language.

"What may that mean in English?"

Carden pointed to the floor with his finger.

"Gentleman downstairs. Name begins with D and ends with L. We never mention him in polite society."

"Oh, I know, the d——. Call him Satan; it sounds better," said Harvey.

"These disappearances are becoming the rage," said Carden. "First of all, Miss Hilda Manasses vanishes

from the festive scene, then the gentle Emily is *non est*. It is a case for the police."

"Won't Jack be upset, that's all."

"I should think so."

"He'll rave and tear like a mad bull."

"Enough to make him, and that is just why I don't want the news to reach him till to-morrow. Who besides you saw the messenger from Oakley Wood?"

"No one."

"Are you sure?"

"Well, Monday ushered the servant in while I was sitting in Jack's rooms, but he did not hear a word that passed. Mrs. Travers wished to inquire if Miss Emily had been to Oxford to see Mr. Harkaway, as she knew they were engaged, and Emily had been missing since breakfast-time."

"I see. It's all right. Not a syllable of this must reach Harkaway's ears."

"Why?"

"He is going to fight a duel with swords to-morrow morning."

Harvey jumped out of his chair with amazement.

"Now you're joking," he exclaimed.

"Am I? I'll take my oath I was never more serious in my life."

"Who with?"

"Lord Tollington."

"Oh, I heard something about him slipping into Tollington. So they are going to fight, eh?"

"Tollington challenged him."

"Why didn't you stop it?"

"Simply because I could not do so. His lordship said he would publicly insult him if he did not accept the challenge. Fighting with swords is not always fatal, and I thought that it was best to let it come off."

"Jack can fence a little," said Harvey, thoughtfully.

"A good deal, you mean; he's all there at it. Now you see why I don't want him upset."

"Of course. Are you his second?"

"I have that distinguished honour."

"I wonder he did not come to me," said Harvey, a little hurt. "But I'm pleased to think he is in good hands."

"The fact is, the whole thing was unexpected. I was sitting in Harkaway's rooms when Kemp brought in the challenge, and he asked me to manage it for him."

"So Kemp's in it."

"Yes."

"Then they have got it up for Harkaway between them; they'll do him some injury before they have done with him. I never saw such determined enemies as he has got."

"There shall be nothing unfair on this occasion," answered Carden. "I promise you I will see him safely through it."

"Can I come?"

"No; I am sorry to say that we have pledged ourselves to have no one on the ground but the principals, seconds, and the doctor."

"If I can't, I can't," said Harvey; "but I should like to see it all. If Tollington hurts Jack, I'll fight him myself."

"So you shall," replied Carden; "but I hope it will be the other way."

Harvey stayed a little longer in Carden's room, but did not attempt to see Jack that evening.

Fighting a duel is a serious matter.

The intelligence he had to communicate would have unnerved Harkaway, and given his opponent an advantage over him.

Therefore, he felt persuaded that Carden was right in asking him to postpone the delivery of the news until the following day.

The night passed anxiously for all parties concerned.

Jack woke up more than once, having had bad dreams, but at half-past four, when his second, who had not attempted to sleep, came to his bedside, he sprang up eagerly.

"Is it time to make a start?" he said.

"Yes; we have some distance to drive."

"Where is the trap?"

"At the stable. It will be ready at five sharp. How do you feel?"

"Fresh as paint," answered Jack. "Stand on one side while I roll into my tub."

Carden got out of his way, and Jack plunged into the invigorating water, sponging himself and splashing about sportively.

In ten minutes he was dressed.

It was a lovely morning in May.

The sun had just risen as they reached the stable, and the air was warm and genial.

They found the dog-cart waiting for them, got in—Carden handling the “ribbons,” as he playfully called the reins—and they were soon spanking along the Iffley Road.

“I was half afraid you wouldn’t wake,” remarked Jack.

“No more I did.”

“Some one called you, then?”

“Wrong again. I did not go to sleep. There was a Van John party going on in Seymour’s rooms, so I toddled over, won a fiver, and left them at it.”

“By Jove! Your nerves must be strong.”

“I hope so. If they were not they would not be of much use to me,” answered Carden, with a smile.

As they went along, Tom gave his companion a few words of final instruction and encouragement.

“You are both of you young and full of wind,” he said, “so that the chances are Tollington will last as long as you. It’s no use trying to hit hard with a sword, as if you were playing at singletick. Rely upon skill, and remember all I have told you.”

Jack said he would do his best.

When they reached the field, Carden alighted from the trap, opened a gate, led the horse in, pulled him some hay out of the rick, and left him standing in a sheltered place, free from observation.

“We are first on the ground,” he observed.

Scarcely had he spoken, before the sound of wheels was heard.

Another trap entered the field, and it contained three men.

A glance sufficed to show that it held Kemp, Lord Tollington, and a little man dressed in black, who from a case of instruments he carried under his arm, it was fair to suppose was the doctor.

“Got a sawbones,” muttered Jack.

Carden and Kemp bowed to each other.

Lord Tollington was smoking a cigar with the utmost nonchalance.

He chatted gaily with the doctor, as if nothing unusual was about to happen.

"Where are your swords?" asked Kemp.

"Here," replied Carden, producing his case.

Kemp examined them carefully and was satisfied with his inspection.

"They will do," he exclaimed. "By-the-bye, may I say two words to Harkaway?"

"Certainly not," answered the other, suspiciously.

"I merely wanted to tell him something."

"Send any message you like through me."

"Well, then, tell him Emily has vanished no one knows where," said Kemp.

Carden felt a strong inclination to knock the villain down.

He felt instantly that this intelligence was intended to weaken and unnerve Harkaway at the last moment.

Putting on a careless air, he replied—

"Oh, that is stale news. We heard that last night."

"Did you?" said Kemp, looking at him inquiringly.

"That's all I wanted to say. Is your man ready?"

"He will be in two minutes. See after your principal."

"Does the first wound stop the fight?" said Carden.

"Yes, the first serious wound; but not a mere scratch."

"Of course not; that is understood."

Going over to Harkaway, Tom Carden exclaimed—

"Strip, old fellow, and take your sword."

Jack quickly took off his coat, waistcoat, and braces.

He stood there in his trousers and shirt.

Round his waist he tied a belt, sailor fashion.

His shoes were very light and elastic.

Taking his sword in his hand, he walked to an open spot indicated.

"I think, Mr. Kemp," observed Carden, "that if we place our men north and south, neither will have the disadvantage of the rising sun."

"No; I think not," replied Kemp.

Lord Tollington and Harkaway faced one another.

"Will the man apologise?" inquired his lordship of Kemp, looking round in a supercilious manner.

Kemp repeated the question to Carden, who answered—

"If his lordship will express his regret for his extraordinary conduct, which led to Mr. Harkaway's chastising him, probably Mr. Harkaway will admit his sorrow at having inflicted bodily pain upon Lord Tollington."

"That is absurd. *En garde*, sir," replied his lordship, saluting.

The swords clashed in the salute.

Then each combatant stepped back; each one's eyes fixed upon the other's; every muscle rigid as iron, each face determined and resolute.

In form Tollington was about Jack's height, and bore some resemblance to him, though the latter was more stoutly built.

The birds sang merrily in the trees and hedgerows; the kine lowed in the meadows, and a gentle breeze wafted the perfume of the May towards the collegians.

Much as Jack had profited by Carden's instructions, they did not seem to avail him much.

If he tried a feint, Lord Tollington was prepared for him.

If he made a desperate and clever thrust, his lordship parried it.

The fact was that Tollington had also been at Eton, and had learnt fencing from the same master who taught Carden; therefore they were both acquainted with the same tricks of fence.

For fully ten minutes they continued to fight without either obtaining a sensible advantage.

At the expiration of that time his lordship succeeded in slightly touching Jack in the breast.

The blood ran down his white shirt, and stained it crimson.

Jack became more wary.

He felt that he was not much hurt, and restraining his nervousness, he watched narrowly for an opportunity.

It came at last.

A whistle was heard in the hedgerow.

"Some one coming," exclaimed Kemp, incautiously.

Lord Tollington did not pay any attention to this remark, but kept his eye fixed on his adversary.

Jack, by a dexterous turn of the wrist, inflicted a severe wound on his lordship.

The unhappy young nobleman fell to the ground with a groan, deluging the greensward with his blood, as Jack deftly withdrew his blade.

In an instant Kemp was supporting him.

The surgeon was also by his side, examining the

wound, which he proceeded to bind up to stop the hemorrhage.

"Eh, lad!" exclaimed a voice. "Be they Oxford gentlemen a-foighting wi' swords?"

Carden saw a country bumpkin eating some bread and bacon.

"Here's half-a-crown for you," he said. "Go to your work and hold your tongue."

"Haud my tongue for haaf-a-crown? That's not me. I mun ha' a suverin'," answered the bumpkin, with a knowing look.

"That's all you'll get from me," said Tom Carden, giving him a hearty kick; "and now be off, unless you want another."

Bumpkin slunk away without another word.

After getting to a safe distance he stopped.

"Gie oi the 'aaf crown," he said.

"See you hanged first."

Jack had hastily put on his clothes, and, going to the surgeon, inquired anxiously after his adversary.

"I hope sincerely he is not much hurt," he said.

"The wound is not mortal," said the doctor, "but he will have to lay up for some time. Fortunately the part touched is fleshy, and no important vessels in the way."

"That is jolly," said Jack. "Can we render you any assistance?"

"None, thanks. We must get him back to college as soon as possible, and say he has a fever."

Jack shook the doctor by the hand and rejoined Carden, who had already taken the dog-cart into the road.

"He's not fatally hurt," he exclaimed. "Hurrah!"

"I knew that by the way he was hit. Jump in. It's all right," said the imperturbable Carden.

Jack was soon by his side and rolling back to Oxford.

"I shall have an appetite for breakfast now," he observed.

"How about your wound? Did he let the daylight in?" asked Carden, whipping up the horse.

"Oh, no. It's merely a scratch. The bone stopped the point of the sword."

"Lucky for you. He fenced better than I expected."

"So I thought. It was my idea, at one time, that he was too good for me."

"You are well out of it, old fellow. I congratulate you."

"Thanks. It has ended better than I hoped," replied Jack.

"Do you remember what Hudibras says?" asked Carden.

"No; what?"

"Ah, me! what perils do environ—the man who meddles with cold iron."

Jack laughed.

"Well, it wasn't altogether my fault," he said, "and, if fellows will fight, why, they must."

With this philosophical remark, he contented himself till they reached Oxford, where they arrived in time for chapel.

Jack did not attend very much to the service that morning.

His thoughts were diverted from religious exercises, and some excuse must be made for him when we consider the excitement he had passed through.

Carden linked his arm in his as they left the chapel, and said—

"You will breakfast with me?"

"Thanks," replied Jack, "I don't like to trespass on your good nature. You must be tired, as you have been up all night, on my account, too. I suppose you will shirk lectures and turn in?"

"No; I shall go to lectures, and sleep there if I feel tired, but, in fact, at our ages a man never ought to feel tired. You must come with me because I have something to tell you."

"Touching what?"

"I shan't say a word till you've fed. Then you shall know my secret."

Totally ignorant of his meaning, and thinking that his friend was only joking with him, Jack went to breakfast, to which he did ploughman's justice.

"Now," said Carden, lighting a cigar, "we will proceed to revelations. Don't you smoke?"

"Yes; I shall put on a modest pipe," replied Jack, charging his well-blackened meerschaum with Bristol bird's-eye.

"Don't be alarmed at what I am going to tell you."

"That depends. What is it?"

"You are spooney on a little girl named Emily, at Oakley Wood."

"Mrs. Travers's place. She is governess there. What of her?" cried Jack, excitedly.

"She has been missing since yesterday morning."

"Who told you this?"

"Harvey. He saw a messenger last night from Oakley Wood."

"Why did you not let me know at once? It was wrong of you; very wrong, indeed," said Jack.

"No, it was not, and I will tell you why. If you had known it you would have been no good in the duel this morning, and got pinked instead of Tollington."

"It is very odd," said Jack, musingly. "First of all Hilda Manasses vanishes, and then Emily. Who can have done it?"

"I think Mr. Kemp knows more about it than he would like to tell."

"Why?"

"Because he wanted me to mention it to you just before the duel began,"

"Did he! Then it's a plot of Davis's, I'll lay my life," exclaimed Jack, adding, "what is to be done?"

He threw down his pipe and groaned.

His enemies had touched him in a sore point when they attacked his darling Emily.

They had tried to make her jealous through Hilda.

They had endeavoured to keep him out of the boat in the 'varsity race.

Hunston had made an attempt on his life, and they had striven hard to get Lord Tollington to kill him.

In all these attempts they had failed.

But at last they had inflicted a wound on his heart which would take a long time to heal.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE CAPTIVE MAIDENS.

THE secret of the duel was well kept. Lord Tollington was reported to be suffering from an attack of low fever, not contagious, which in a few weeks would be cured.

The authorities of St. Aldate's were far from suspecting that a desperate duel had been fought by two gentlemen in residence in the college.

Jack sent Monday every day to inquire after the health of his injured opponent, and once or twice ventured to make him presents of grapes and flowers.

These were invariably returned with a polite message by his lordship's scout.

In every way in his power Jack tried to find out what had become of Hilda and Emily, but without success.

The truth was that the Duke of Woodstock had employed Hunston to carry off the beautiful Jewess.

Frank Davis had given him a similar mission with regard to Emily.

Hunston had acquitted himself well of the double trust, and received handsome payment for his villainy.

The two maidens had been taken to a labourer's cottage a few miles out of Oxford.

This cottage was situated near a wood, and being built in a secluded spot, very few people passed near it.

An agricultural labourer, his wife and two sons, lived in it.

For a good round sum, paid in advance, the labourer agreed to guard the girls.

He gave them the three rooms at the top of the house, undertaking that they should not escape.

His wife brought them their meals, and books were supplied them to beguile the monotony of their captivity.

At the bottom of the stairs an unusually fierce mastiff dog was chained, and he barked and tore at the chain when either of the prisoners appeared on the stairs.

The height of the windows from the ground rendered escape impossible in that direction.

Hilda had arrived at the cottage some hours before Emily, but agitated and alarmed as she was, she hailed the advent of a companion with joy.

After they had been together a few hours they became great friends.

Emily fancied she had seen Hilda somewhere before, and told her so.

Then it flashed across both their minds how they had met in the Broad Walk, when Hilda was hanging upon Jack's arm.

They saw in an instant they loved the same man.

"Mr. Harkaway is your sweetheart, dear," said Hilda. "I will not think of him any more. If I had known this at first, I would not have been so silly as to love him."

"We cannot control our hearts," replied Emily, "and I am sure you were not to blame."

"Have you forgiven me for seeming to step between you and your love?"

"Long ago. Jack explained it all to me. Let us not think of the past; our common danger is so great that we must be sisters to each other."

"Willingly, dear Emily," answered Hilda, kissing her tenderly. "I wish Mr. Harkaway knew where we are."

"So do I; he would quickly liberate us; but what I want to know is why we have been taken here, and with what object."

"Can you think of no one who has perscuted you with his attentions?"

"There is only Frank Davis from Singapore; he carried me off once before—it may be he; and you, dear, have you no tiresome lover? Surely, with your beauty, you must have many admirers."

"The Duke of Woodstock has been paying me attentions, but I have given him no encouragement because I fancied he was not honourable. The money-lender's daughter, the Jewess, belonging to a despised race, is no match for a duke of England," replied Hilda.

"And if she were, would you wed?" asked Emily, smiling.

"Perhaps—I know not," answered Hilda in some confusion. "Now I know Mr. Harkaway can never be mine, I might do worse than marry a handsome young gentleman for his money and title."

"If it should be as you suspect," replied Emily, "we will try and frighten his grace into matrimony. I feel persuaded our friends will find us, and perhaps his lordship would prefer to marry the beautiful Hilda, rather than be publicly prosecuted for what the law calls abduction. As for Mr. Davis, I will not rest satisfied until the authorities expel him from Oxford."

Hilda regarded her courageous friend with admiration.

"How brave you are, dear," she said.

"If you had met with the startling adventures I did after I was wrecked, you would know how to think and act in an emergency like this," replied Emily.

Then she related several incidents of their stay in Pisang, praising Jack unavoidably for the share he took in them, till Hilda's face glowed, and she felt that Harkaway was worthy of any woman's love, for he was a hero, without fear and without reproach.

A week passed without the girls seeing any one, or being able to glean any intelligence from the old woman who attended to their wants.

Their alarm increased as the time glided by.

At length their doubts were put an end to by the appearance of the Duke of Woodstock and Frank Davis, who entered the little sitting-room together.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon.

The day had been foggy and cloudy.

Rain was falling heavily, and without all was as cold and dreary as the girls' hearts.

"Pardon our intrusion upon your charming privacy, young ladies," said Davis. "We could not keep so much loveliness cooped up any longer without coming to look at it."

Hilda was too much frightened to speak.

But Emily was equal to the occasion.

"Our suspicions were correct, it seems," she said, "when they pointed to you two as our abductors. Your companion, I presume, is the Duke of Woodstock?"

"Aw—no," answered the duke. "Fact is, name of Smith. Mr. Smith of London. Very common name—aw."

"Whoever you are," answered Emily, "depend upon it you will have to pay dearly for this outrage."

"Hope not, aw'm sure," said the duke. "Got no money—aw—bad thing to be—aw—without money."

"How long do you mean to keep us here, and what is your object, Mr. Davis?" continued Emily. "You and I are old enemies. We understand one another, and I can talk to you, but not to that affected and conceited nobleman by your side."

"Baw Jove!" muttered the duke, "little girl's got a good—aw—cheek. Fancy she's giving it me—aw—wather stwong."

"Your question is easily answered," replied Davis.
"You will not leave this place until you are my wife."

"Indeed!" she said, with a scornful curl of the lip.
"You choose an agreeable way of courting. If that is your determination I fear I shall spend the remainder of my life here; and Hilda, what is to be her fate?—the same, I suppose?"

"Yes; his grace——"

"Smith, my dear fellow. You forget. Say Smith," put in the duke.

"Nonsense. They know who you are," rejoined Davis, impatiently. "The Duke of Woodstock, I say, Miss Scratchley, is resolved to wed Miss Hilda."

"Whether she will or not?"

"Exactly."

"I suppose you have some mock marriage in contemplation, and have employed some villain like yourself to play the part of priest."

"No, on my honour."

"Your honour!" repeated Emily, satirically. "Do you want to make me laugh? Honour and you have been on distant terms for some time past."

"You are severe," said Davis, biting his lip.

"Am I?" she replied. "I feel glad you think so. Now hear me, Mr. Davis; if we are not instantly released, we will raise such a hornet's nest about both of you, that you shall be in prison before long."

Davis laughed.

"It is very well to threaten, but you must remember that you are in our power. Think of the concern of your friends at your disappearance."

"That reflection only embitters me more against you."

"Perhaps we have behaved rather harshly," Davis went on; "yet you ought to excuse us, when you recollect how dearly we love you."

"Love!"

"Yes, indeed. I am dying with love for you, and the Duke of Woodstock is so smitten with Hilda's charms, that he does nothing but rave about her all day."

"Truth that; it is, baw Jove!" replied the duke. "I'd give a thou. now, for a kiss; fact, I assuaw you."

"We will have nothing to say to you or your love

either," said Emily. "Take it where it will be thought more of."

"Perhaps," said Davis bitterly, "as the weeks slip away, and the long months of your captivity follow one another, you will speak more civilly."

"What?" replied Emily; "do you think that anything would induce us to speak civilly, as you call it, to such villains as you have proved yourselves to be. We are only polite to gentlemen, and not to ruffians who disgrace themselves by persecuting helpless girls."

"Your very helplessness ought to be an argument in our favour."

"It is not; and perhaps we are not so utterly defenceless as you imagine. Perhaps Mr. Harkaway is not so far from this spot now," said Emily.

She did not hope indeed for any such good luck.

It was a random shot, fired with the intention of frightening her visitors.

"Have you any reason to expect Harkaway?" said Davis, turning white.

"I shall answer no questions."

"Jove!" exclaimed the duke. "Bettaw be off; shouldn't like to meet that fellah Harkaway here—deuced—aw—disagreeable thing that."

"Pray don't go," said Emily, laughing in her sleeve.

"I should like to see you face a genuine man."

"Think bettaw go, come another time—aw," cried the duke.

He was restless and uneasy.

"I fancied I saw three fellows following us, and I suspected they were Dawson, Harvey and Harkaway. One was running after us," remarked Davis.

"Awkward, vewy, if they happen to—aw—spot us."

"Well," continued Davis, "we will go, but you may expect us again to-morrow, ladies."

"Let's have—aw—one kiss before we part," said the duke, with an amorous glance in Hilda's direction.

"Dash my—aw—buttons, but one kiss."

Hilda had been crouching up in a corner.

He advanced to the lovely Jewess, and tried to kiss her.

She shrieked loudly, and beat him back with her hands, and struggled furiously.

"Can't do better than follow a good example," remarked Frank Davis; "one kiss from your pretty lips, Emily."

Emily, however, was not inclined to gratify him.

She ran to the window, threw it open, and cried loudly for assistance.

"Help, help!" she screamed. "We shall be murdered! Help, help!"

Davis's arm was round her waist.

She felt his hot breath on her cheek.

"By Heaven!" he cried, "I will have a kiss, if I die for it."

Suddenly a voice exclaimed—

"All right, Emily. Hold on a minute. I'm here, and two more not far off."

Emily uttered a cry of joy.

Then she fell down in a swoon.

The man who had answered her desperate appeal for help was Harkaway.

He was coming along at the double to the rescue.

When he spoke he was only a few yards off the cottage.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

STORMING THE COTTAGE.

FRANK DAVIS was right when he fancied that he and the Duke of Woodstock were followed as they left Oxford.

They drove quickly in a phaeton which they had left in the road.

But swiftly as they went, they were not fast enough for Jack.

His wind was in excellent order, and he kept the carriage in sight all the way till it stopped.

Then he followed its occupants to the cottage, and waited for Sir Sydney Dawson and Harvey to come up.

He would have gone to the cottage at once, had he not feared to do so single-handed.

After long consideration, his suspicions pointed to Davis.

"Watch him," said Dawson.

Harvey agreed with his opinion.

The consequence was that Davis and the duke were seen to leave the college together, and pursued with the successful result we have indicated.

Jack would not have made his presence known unless Emily had appealed for help as she did.

Then he could bear the suspense no longer.

Dawson and Harvey, not being such good runners, were a little way behind him.

But they, too, heard the piteous scream, and rushed on with renewed vigour.

The two sons of the labourer to whom the cottage belonged had just come home from work.

As it was such a wet and miserable day they left off earlier than usual.

Davis saw the danger in which he was placed.

"Mind the girls," he exclaimed to Woodstock, and rushed downstairs.

"Barricade the doors back and front," he called to the men. "You shall have five pounds apiece if you will do what I tell you."

This was a large sum of money to people in their position.

They obeyed his commands with alacrity.

The doors were made safe from an attack from without by heavy iron bars.

In a short space the windows were also secured, and chairs placed against them, backed up with bedding to prevent the entrance of stones or bricks.

"Now, my fine fellows, kick it out till you are tired," said Davis, looking round complacently.

He was joined by the duke.

"Both—aw—women fainted. Thought it best to—aw—leave them," he said.

"Never mind them at present," replied Davis.

"What's—aw—this wow?"

"Harkaway and some friends of his have followed and found us out. He knows Emily is here, because he heard her scream."

"Heawd her scweam. Deuced awkward fix—aw," said the duke.

"We must stand a siege, that's all. Bother that man Harkaway: he's always got the kick on his side."

"Wondaw," said the duke, "if these people have—aw—got any liquor."

"Not they," answered Davis. "They are too poor. Think of our position. How are we to get out of this scrape?"

"Beastly awkward scwape. Think shall cut the—aw—university, and take a cruise in my—aw—yacht somewhere down the—aw—Mediterranean way."

"What is a poor beggar like me to do? I wish I had never mixed myself up in the mess," said Davis, biting his nails with vexation.

"Your governaw is rich—aw."

"I know that; but he'll have me back again to that beastly Singapore, which I hate, if I am sent away from Oxford."

"Nevaw mind. Come with me—aw—we'll enjoy ourselves. Bothaw Oxford. What's Oxford—aw—to us?" said the duke.

His further utterance was cut short by a furious attack upon the door.

"Pound away," exclaimed Davis. "It can stand all that."

Jack had been joined by Sir Sydney Dawson and Harvey.

Briefly he explained to them what had taken place.

Their blood boiled at the thought of the helpless girls who were probably being insulted by their cowardly abductors.

Presently the knocking ceased.

"Within there!" exclaimed Jack.

"Don't answer him," whispered Davis.

"Open the door, or we'll break it in," cried Jack.

There was no reply.

Again the hammering commenced.

It lasted a good ten minutes, when the assailants saw that it was useless to continue the attack in that direction.

For some time there was a dead silence.

Then the chairs and bedding fell down, and a dark form appeared on the sill.

It was Sir Sydney Dawson, armed with a thick stick.

Immediately it was seen that they were taken by surprise, the two sons of the labourer rushed to the threatened point.

Each fell to the ground from a well directed blow of Sir Sydney.

"Who is the next gentleman?" he exclaimed, blandly.

Davis took up a large kettle and threw it at him.

It struck him on the chest, and he fell back on the grass, having lost his balance.

He was up again, however, before they could close the window.

"Thank you," he said. "Perhaps you will oblige me again."

The labourer himself now attacked him with a spade.

It appeared to be Dawson's object to divert the attention of those in the cottage, for he contented himself with parrying the blows with the spade and chaffing those inside.

"Quite a family party," he said. "Sorry to disturb you. What, you won't be quiet, old gentleman? Take that, then, in return for the last prod you gave me on the shins, which is somewhat painful. Down again! Who is the next gentleman?"

The labourer had his head broken by a well-directed blow from Dawson's bludgeon, and he joined his two sons.

Davis picked up a poker, and took up the battle, but Dawson, being perched on the window-sill, had the advantage of fighting from a superior height.

The contest went on between them for some time, Dawson receiving a few blows, and Davis at last getting one on the sword arm, which made it fall helpless by his side.

With a fierce howl he withdrew, and the poker slipped from his hand.

"Thank you. Sold again and got the money. Who is the next gentleman?" exclaimed Sir Sydney, with his habitual smile.

No one answered.

"My lord duke," he continued, addressing his grace, who had taken no part in the combat, "can I oblige you?"

"Aw—thank you, not at pwesent. Not a fighting man, you see—aw," replied the duke.

A low whistle was heard outside.

"Mr. Davis," said Dawson.

"What is it?" asked Davis, sullenly.

"I think I have made a very clever diversion for my

two friends, Mr. Harkaway and Harvey. While I have been amusing myself with the inmates of the garrison, they have, by the aid of Providence and a ladder, rescued the two ladies whom you held in captivity in an upper chamber."

"Deuce take them!" cried Davis, livid with rage.

"In two minutes they will be on the road to Oxford in your carriage, being under the care of Mr. Harvey."

"Ten thousand furies!" almost shrieked Davis. "Do you want to madden me?"

"Pardon me; one minute more. Mr. Harkaway and myself remain behind for the express purpose of setting fire to this cottage in two places, and burning it to the ground."

"You dare not."

"Time will show," replied Sir Sydney, adding, "when we return to Oxford, your conduct will be laid before the authorities; proceedings will be taken criminally against you; and if the Duke of Woodstock does not marry Miss Hilda Manasses, a long term of imprisonment will probably await his amorous grace."

"Maww a Jewess," replied the duke; "that's a neat idea."

"It will be a case of the Jewess or the gaol, my lord. While to Mr. Davis no mercy at all will be shown, and if he is wise, he will not return to the college at all."

He turned his head to speak to Jack.

Then he resumed—

"Mr. Harkaway informs me that the ladies have started, and that he is quite prepared with dry straw and matches. I have the honour to hope, gentlemen, that you will enjoy the little fire we intend to light for you."

Sir Sydney disappeared from the window.

His antagonists were dumfounded.

The labourer and his sons were on their legs, and rubbing their hands with their knuckles, while they looked round them in some confusion.

Davis ran upstairs.

The rooms were empty.

A ladder stood against the window, and he saw that Sir Sydney Dawson had not misled him.

While he was engaging their attention below, the birds had flown.

"The game's up," he muttered. "I shall go to London. Oxford is no longer the place for me. As for Woodstock, he'd better marry the Jewess, or get out of it as he can."

Suddenly a smell of fire ascended the stairs, which was followed by a dense smoke.

"By Heaven!" he cried, "they have set the cottage on fire."

He was right.

Harkaway and Dawson had set light to the vile den in two different places.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE MATCH AT LORD'S.

FEELING satisfied that Harkaway and Dawson really had set fire to the cottage, Davis did the most clever thing he could under the circumstances.

He got out of the window, and descended by the ladder which had enabled Emily and Hilda to escape.

About the same time, those on the ground floor of the cottage, not wishing to be suffocated like rats in a drain, opened the door.

They were just in time.

The flames had caught the old tumble-down place in two quarters, and were already raging furiously.

With a sort of stupor the labourer and his family gazed at the work of devastation.

They were losing their all, but they had richly deserved it.

Rousing himself at last, the old man went up to Jack, who was standing a short distance off, watching the conflagration with folded arms.

By his side was Sir Sydney.

Frank Davis and the Duke of Woodstock, heartily ashamed of themselves, slunk off together.

"It be you who ha' done this," exclaimed the labourer.

"Yes," replied Jack.

"What beest thy naam?"

"Mr. Harkaway, of St. Aldate's."

"I'll make 'ee paay for it," said the old man, angrily.

"If you want compensation for what I have done, you should apply to your noble employer, the Duke of Woodstock, who has just left your burning cottage."

"Be 'e the Dook of Woodstock?" cried the labourer, in surprise.

"Yes. And as he hired you to do a dirty action, for which you ought to be kicked, and are justly punished, he should see you through it, and not let you suffer for the result. You will get no compensation out of me—not a rap."

"Hey! and why noat?"

"I will tell you, my man," continued Jack. "You have detained two young ladies in your house in a most unjustifiable manner. You kept them prisoners against their will, and any magistrate in England would say it served you right if you lose everything you have got."

"We be turned out of house and hoam."

"All your own fault. See your employers."

Jack turned on his heel, and taking Dawson's arm, walked back to Oxford, talking as he went about what had happened.

He was furiously enraged against Davis and the duke, but delighted beyond measure at having rescued the girls after all.

The flames of the burning cottage lit up the surrounding country for a time.

Then all was desolate and dull again.

The cottagers were ruined, but, as Jack said, it served them right.

In the end they obtained a sum of money from the duke, and were better off than they were before.

Emily returned to her situation at Oakley Wood.

Hilda went to her father, who was full of gratitude.

He told Jack that his fortune was at his disposal. Once he had saved his daughter's life, now he had saved her honour.

Frank Davis did not show up again in the university.

He vanished, and no one knew where he went to.

Threats of exposure and a prosecution induced the Duke of Woodstock to marry the fair Hilda.

She did not love him, but knowing she could never be Jack's wife, she made the best of her lot, and became a duchess.

This pleased old Manasses immensely.

The duke did not continue to reside in the university.

He went abroad with his beautiful bride, and when his friends became reconciled to the match, it was admitted on all hands that he might have done worse.

Manasses gave his daughter a hundred thousand pounds, which was a noble fortune, as the Duke of Woodstock's title was not a rich one.

"He could—aw—draw upon the old man," he remarked, "if he—aw—evaw became hard up. Something—aw—to have a rich—aw—father-in-law."

This was a consolation to his grace's mind.

Jack congratulated himself upon getting rid of one of his enemies.

Hunston was not seen again in Oxford after this affair, in which he played such a base part.

It was supposed he had made himself scarce, fearing the law would be put in motion against him.

So only Kemp remained behind to be a thorn in Harkaway's side.

Davis, however, did not leave England.

It was destined that he should still influence Harkaway's career in a most remarkable and romantic manner, as will be related as we proceed.

May passed, and the lovely summer time commenced, so favourable to cricket.

Jack had not forgotten his school days, and it was found that he was such a good batsman that he was put in the eleven. Bowling was not his strong point, but he was an excellent field, and could throw up against any one at Oxford.

Every one looked forward with considerable interest to the great annual match between Oxford and Cambridge at Lord's ground in London.

Sir Sydney Dawson, Harvey, and Carden, and a host of other men, obtained leave to go up to town to witness the match.

Great expectations were formed respecting the Oxford team, which was a capital eleven.

Cambridge had been victorious for two years in succession, and it was hoped that this time Oxford would reverse the verdict, and score a victory.

Mr. Bedington, his wife, and Emily, were all in London, staying at the Langham Hotel, where Jack joined them.

They had their carriage sent into the ground overnight, and took up their position in the front row about eleven.

At twelve the wickets were pitched, and Oxford, having won the toss, they elected to go in.

The morning was a lovely one. If anything, the sun was a little too hot ; but that was better than having rain.

Vast crowds of spectators thronged the ground, and the applause was great when the Oxford captain sent Harkaway and the Honourable H. Cavendish to the wickets.

Play began. In the first over Cavendish was caught off his bat by the wicket-keeper. Loud cheers arose from the Cantabs. No runs for one wicket. Tom Carden went in next.

He was not a brilliant player, but cautious and steady.

He puzzled the bowling by his defence, and was fond of blocking the ball, and making ones off tips.

By this time Jack had mastered the bowling, and began to play.

His first hit was a fine cut to leg for four, well run.

Then he made several singles, being well assisted by Carden.

Two maiden overs followed, but Jack, getting well on to the ball, drove it to the pavilion for six.

For fully an hour the two boating men faced one another.

It was a tedious piece of leather-hunting for the Cantabs, as the ball went all over the field.

At length Carden was clean bowled, stumps flying, and bails being scattered.

"How's that, umpire?" cried the delighted captain of Cambridge.

"Out," was the stolid reply.

Up went the ball high in the air, amidst the cheers of the spectators.

Carden was much applauded, as he had played a very steady innings of twenty-seven.

The score with wides and byes, now stood at fifty-nine for two wickets.

Harvey, who was also in the eleven, went in next.

His career was a short but a brilliant one.

He made four threes, a six, two fours, and seven singles.

Jack's score was rising rapidly, and as Harvey went out, the 100 went up amidst loud cheering.

Soon afterwards there was an adjournment for luncheon, and in the pavilion Jack was congratulated upon his play.

"Carry your bat out, old man," said Dawson, "and we shall lick them in one innings."

"I feel as if I could do anything to-day," replied Jack, confidently.

After luncheon he went in again, having Lord Tabley facing him.

Tabley was the captain of the eleven, and great things were expected of the two.

Nor did they disappoint their admirers.

The score rose steadily to 200, of which Jack had contributed half.

When his three figures were telegraphed the shouting might have been heard in Regent's Park.

"Isn't Jack playing a fine innings?" remarked Harvey to Mr. Bedington, over the side of whose carriage he was leaning.

"Splendid! Jack's a fine fellow," replied his father.

Emily's face flushed at hearing her lover praised.

"Have some champagne, Harvey. It won't hurt you this hot day," said Mr. Bedington.

"Thank you, sir," replied Dick, as the servant handed him some wine deliciously iced.

"Jack will become quite famous in sporting and athletic circles, will he not?" said Emily, "since his name is getting in the papers as a boating and cricketing man of great promise."

"I hope it won't make him forget his reading," remarked Mr. Bedington.

"Not it, sir. Jack sticks to his lectures like a leech, and has a coach, too. He'll come out a double first in the school, you see if he doesn't," cried Harvey, who firmly believed his dear old friend to be an Admirable Crichton, capable of doing everything, and doing it well, too.

Steadily the play went on.

Lord Tabley went out for fifty.

Still the score rose.

Three hundred were marked, and there were yet two wickets to go down.

It seemed as if Jack would carry his bat out after all, and he dearly wished to manage the achievement, which

is so much prized amongst cricketers, but so very seldom accomplished.

Exactly at twenty minutes past four, the last Oxford man was bowled.

Jack carried his bat out for 175, and the grand total of the Oxford eleven was 391.

"Let them beat that if they can," shouts Oxford, excitedly. "Bravo, Harkaway! Well played indeed, sir. Hurrah for Harkaway!"

With difficulty Jack kept the crowd off, and he was glad when his sympathising friends were driven back, as the two first Cantabs came in.

Jack was "long off."

The fielding of Oxford was as good as her batting, and the bowling as true as a die.

There was no trifling with it.

Twenty-two eyes followed every movement of the ball—twenty-two arms and hands were ever on the alert, and as many legs were ready to run like steam engines at the slightest provocation.

Up goes the ball, high in the air—a perfect skyer.

It travels towards Jack, and threatens to go over his head into the crowd beyond.

He runs back to stop it, keeping his eyes fixed on the flying disc.

"He'll miss it," said the crowd.

"No, he won't."

"Yes, he will."

"No, no."

"By Jove! he's got it."

And again the throng shouts itself hoarse as it says—

"Bravo, Harkaway! Well caught, by Jove, sir."

Jack had sprung clean up a foot or two from the ground, and caught the skyer with his left hand in grand style.

Then went out the hope of the Cambridge eleven.

The best bat they had, the pride of the eleven, and the hope of the university.

Four wickets went down for sixty, and then Jack had another chance of distinguishing himself.

A tremendous drive came towards him.

He ran up and stopped it.

"Well hit, well hit; run it out," cried the Cambridge men. "Run it out!"

Jack saw his chance, and took a shot at the stumps, which, considering the distance, was a dangerous thing to do.

Knowing what Jack was capable of, the wicket-keeper returned to the other side, and did not attempt to stop the ball.

The stumps were hit, and flew about like pieces of animated wood.

In surprise, the batsman stopped and stared half way. He was out.

Again the crowd shouts itself hoarse, and the reporters in the press tent make a note for publication of this clever bit of fielding on the part of Harkaway.

At six the Cambridge men were all out for the paltry amount of 120.

They followed their innings.

When the stumps were drawn, they had three wickets down for eighty.

Jack was a hero that evening, and went to the play with his friends.

The next day the match was a foregone conclusion.

By half-past one Cambridge was all out for 210, which gave them a total of 330; therefore, they lost the match in one innings, and Oxford had 61 to spare.

"If it hadn't been for Harkaway, we might have pulled it off," said the light blues, disconsolately.

But it is just such men as Harkaway who win battles and change the fortunes of nations, as well as win boat-races and cricket matches.

The playground shows what a man is capable of, and gives promise of what he can, may, and will do in the great world.

Jack was a great man in Oxford now, and may fairly be called one of the shining lights and leaders of the university.

Soon afterwards the long vacation commenced.

He went home, passing his time in reading principally, for he meant to take high honours if he could.

A trip to France in August was an agreeable change, and he returned home in time for the partridges.

Being a keen sportsman, and a good shot, he made sad havoc with the birds.

Harvey spent nearly all the vacation with him, and in

October he visited Sir Sydney Dawson, and helped him to kill the pheasants.

It was with genuine pleasure that, when the winter term came, he once more took up his residence in Oxford, which he loved so well.

His first visit was to Moses Manasses, to inquire after his daughter.

Hilda was at Baden-Baden with her husband, the Duke of Woodstock.

She wrote contentedly, and said that her position abroad was a magnificent one ; her pride was gratified, and she found such delight in continental society, that she did not care about having married for position.

The duke was kind to her.

Manasses went on making money, all of which he declared should be his daughter's.

"Woodstock, sir," he remarked, "shall be the richest duke of England when I die."

Jack believed he would keep his word.

"Ah, sir," added the Jew, "all this monish might have been yours, but you are a gentleman, Mr. Harkaway, and have behaved like one. God bless you, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob bless you. My daughter owes her life and her honour to you. I am fond of monish—it is my trade, but should you want any, come to me ; my purse is yours."

"Thank you very much," answered Jack, "but I hope I am all right. I don't bet, I don't gamble, and am not extravagant."

"You don't know, sir, what may happen. Come to me—come to old Moses Manasses, of the Corn Market, Oxford, if ever you are pushed into a corner. So help me, Mr. Harkaway, you shall have a cheque. I'll charge you no interest, and if yca never pay me, I shall never ask you."

"You're a good fellow, Manasses," exclaimed Jack.

"No, I'm not," replied the Jew ; "many would tell you a very different tale, but I'm genuine to you, sir. Let us be friends, Mr. Harkaway ; I've got few enough."

"Why ?"

"Because I'm a Jew, and lend money, that's all."

Jack shook him cordially by the hand.

"I'll come in sometimes," he said, "and smoke a pipe

with you. If you're a bad Jew, all I can say is, I've met many a worse Christian."

Moses Manasses was delighted at this compliment.

He repeated his offer; told Jack that if it had not been for him Hilda would never have been a duchess, and ended by making him accept a hundred-pound note as a present.

"Young men never have too much monish, Mr. Harkaway, and you've done me many a good turn. Take it, sir. If you don't I'll—I don't know what I'll do, but by Abraham it will be something dreadful."

Jack smiled, took the note, and went to his rooms.

Harvey was there, talking to Monday.

Monday had been given some money by Jack, during the "long" to travel about England, Scotland and Ireland.

He came back a great man in his own estimation, for he had seen a great deal.

"Oh, I say, Jack," exclaimed Harvey, "there's a card for you."

Jack took it and read—

"Mr. Gentle May."

"I don't know any one of that name," he said.

"I thought not; but the cove said he had a letter of introduction to you."

"Is he a freshman?"

"Yes; I'll swear he is, for a more spooney bloke I never saw in my life; he is as soft as putty," replied Harvey.

"Where is he now?"

"Said he would come back in half-an-hour."

"All right," replied Jack. "Monday!"

"Sare," replied the black.

"Show Mr. Gentle May in when he calls, and order me a broil from the 'Mitre' at six; I shan't dine in hall to-day," said Jack.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

GENTLE MAY.

"So you are clearing off your enemies one by one," remarked Harvey. "Davis is gone, Hunston has sloped, and Kemp doesn't seem in good form."

"He is poor," answered Jack. "I heard that his father is only a curate somewhere in Berkshire. He must have dropped a pot over the boat-race."

"Old Mo' lent him some coin at the time, and is pressing him for it."

"Is he? Manasses would do anything for me. I'll give Kemp a shove up behind when I see the Jew," said Jack.

"I would—he deserves a lift; but I don't think you have much to fear from Kemp now Davis is gone. Davis used to pay Kemp."

"I know, but Davis may pull the strings from a distance. From what I know of Davis's character I should say he was not a man to give up a hatred easily, and he will be all the more vindictive towards me now; besides he will have nothing else to do but to think how he can badger me."

"Davis has a rich father—it's nice to have a father," said Harvey, with a laugh; "and he will be all right for coin in London."

"Well, don't talk about the beast," replied Jack impatiently. "I don't want to think of him; let him slide. He may be well off or not; I don't care, so long as he don't worry me. As for Kemp, if he has to leave, his only resource would be skittle sharpening."

"Or he might turn billiard-marker," suggested Harvey. Jack laughed.

"His game would be plunder in some shape or another," he said; adding, "there is someone at the door—Mr. May perhaps. Wonder what sort of a pup he is?"

It was Mr. Gentle May, who, preceded by Monday, entered the room with a girl-like simper and an awkward bow.

He was about the average height, had a dark complexion, which contrasted strangely with lightish hair of a curling tendency, parted in the middle; his moustache was fair; whiskers and beard he had none. About his mouth there was a smile, half imbecile, half cunning, and his manner was confused and shy.

"Have I the pleasure," he said, "of addressing Mr. Harkaway of St. Aldate's?"

"That's my name," replied Jack, "but I am engaged with a friend. In what way can I serve you?"

"Ah," replied Mr. May, "dear mamma said I should find Oxford very practical, and that the men—I mean the gentlemen there, would soon make a man of me. I am recalled to myself. Thank you, Mr. Harkaway, for reminding me that at last my frail bark is launched upon the waters of the wide, wide world. Ma said——"

"Will you come to the point, sir?" exclaimed Jack.

"Ah, yes, certainly. Ma always said I was so discursive. You know, Mr. Harkaway, or rather you do not know that I have eleven sisters; I am the only boy in the family, and they have all made a great pet of me."

"Glad to hear it. Pity you left home, isn't it?" said Jack.

"No; I want to be a man, and, as I have never been to school, I am rather soft, ma says."

"Your mother is right for once in her life, although I have not the honour of the lady's acquaintance," answered Jack impatiently.

"Oh, ma always is right," answered Gentle May seriously; "she and my eldest sister, Robertina—we call her Bobby, Mr. Harkaway—taught me all I know, with the exception of the music, my second sister, Thomasina—we call her Tommy, Mr. Harkaway—made me learn; and I can do Latin and Greek, and French and——"

"Come and see me again to-morrow, will you?" said Jack. "You've been here half-an-hour; you shall have the same amount of time each day till the end of the week, and by that time, if you have not got to your business, I shall turn you up."

"Certainly; very kind of you, Mr. Harkaway. Good-day, to-morrow I will be with you betimes. Ma says I'm so slow, and Bobby's always scolding me for not collecting my ideas," said Mr. Gentle May.

"Monday!" shouted Jack, "the door."

Monday let the visitor out, and Jack and Harvey began to laugh.

"That's a queer character, if you like," said Jack.

"I can't believe any man could be such an ass at his age—fancy his talking about his ma and his sisters. I think he's kidding."

"What?" said Jack.

"Humbugging, putting on."

"Why should he?"

"You will know what brings him to you to-morrow."

"Yes; I wish I hadn't started him now, my curiosity is excited. Here comes my humble dinner; have a bit?"

"Don't mind if I do. Never can settle down at Oxford the first day," answered Harvey.

"You know you are welcome, Dick," said Jack, good-naturedly. "If it was my last crust, I'd share it with you."

"And you know, Jack, that I'd sell my boots and go barefoot, if it would do you any good," answered Harvey.

"Of course you would, and I'd ask you to do it in a moment if there was necessity for it, dear boy, but I'm flush. Old Manasses gave me a hundred pounds. and if you will have half——"

Harvey hesitated.

"I won't ask you; I'll make you have it. Take it, Dick; it will pay for lots of little things you want. What! you won't? I shall have to slip into you, sir, if you don't do what you are told," he added.

Harvey took the money.

The tears came into his eyes.

"If I didn't like you so much as I do, Jack," he exclaimed, "I'd see you at Pisang before I'd touch a half-penny piece of it."

"Shut up, do," said Jack, looking as if it was the first time he had done a kind thing in his life.

"All right. I'll have my revenge the first time I get half a chance," said Harvey laughing.

Then they had a nice little dinner, and a bottle of claret—best Lafitte—and talked together as only old friends who love one another with all their hearts can talk.

As Jack was coming out of chapel the next day, he met his visitor of the preceding afternoon, who, with the same

civility, asked him how he was, and accompanied him to his rooms.

Jack volunteered to take his new friend to lectures, which he did.

When they were over, May proposed to walk through the town.

Passing an hotel, Jack proposed a glass of beer.

"What would ma say," answered Gentle May, "if she only knew I drank beer before dinner?"

"Better telegraph home and ask her permission," replied Jack.

"No. I mean to be gay," said May. "I'm not at home now, and I shall do as you all do up here."

They strolled into a billiard-room which was empty.

Jack began to knock the balls about.

"Do you play?" he asked.

"A little. I know bagatelle. I can beat my sisters at that. Let us play for something; I have plenty of money."

"No. I don't care about that—not with you, at least," answered Jack.

"We will play five games. You give me twenty out of fifty. If you beat me three times, you shall have my new horse, which ma gave me, and if I beat you, you shall pay me the value of the horse."

"All right," said Jack. "That seems fair. "Will you break?"

"Yes," replied Gentle May.

He took the spot ball and made a miss in baulk; Jack followed, and the game proceeded evenly until Jack had a lucky break, which made them thirty all.

Then May went ahead, and won the game easily.

"One to you," said Jack. "It doesn't look like my winning the horse."

"Oh, it's only my flukes. See what luck I had," replied Gentle May.

Jack won the second game, but May easily beat him in the third and fourth.

"That's three to me," he cried. "What would ma say if she knew I had such luck?"

"What do you value your horse at?" said Jack, biting his lips with vexation. "We forgot to settle that."

"Oh, he is a very good horse, but I will say forty pounds to you."

Jack took out of his pocket the notes Moses Manasses had given him, and with something like a groan, paid the money.

To be beaten in such an easy way by a man like Gentle May was a disgrace.

He had calculated upon an easy victory ; in which case he would not have accepted the horse.

May pocketed the money, and said—

“ Do you want a horse, Mr. Harkaway ? ”

“ As it happens, I do,” replied Jack. “ A little exercise on horseback would do me good.”

“ If you give me twenty pounds more, you shall have mine. Pay me when you like. Your note of hand will do.”

Jack thought he spoke in a very business-like sort of manner.

“ Let’s go and see it,” he said.

“ Come with me. It is at the stables,” replied May, adding—“ Oh ! what would ma say if she knew I was going to sell the fiery steed she gave me ? It is fiery, but so easily managed by a good rider.”

They went to the stables, and Jack though Gentle May knew his way very well about Oxford for a freshman, as he went direct to the street without asking his way.

The horse was a fine handsome chestnut, and seemed cheap at sixty pounds.

A groom touched his hat to Jack, who recognised him as a man who had attended to Sir Sydney Dawson’s steeple-chaser, and to whom he had given something after winning the race.

“ Going to buy a ’orse, Mr. ’Arkaway, sir ? ” said the groom, whose name was Stubbles.

“ Thinking of it,” replied Jack.

Stubbles beckoned him on one side.

“ Reg’lar wicious brute, that, sir,” he said. “ Crib-biter, kicker, bolter ; a perfect wretch, sir, all up his darned back. Don’t you have no truck with him.”

“ Is he sound ? ”

“ Sound as a roach, sir, and right as the mail. He’s got wind and bottom enough to win a Darby. That ain’t what I’m talking of ; it’s ’is beastly temper, sir, Mr. ’Arkaway, sir.”

“ Well, I’m not a chicken, Stubbles ; I can ride a little bit,” replied Jack, with a smile.

"In course you can, sir. There hain't your match in Hoxford ; no, nor in the shire, for that matter. Still, I wouldn't part my coin for a hugely-tempered helephant like that. More like a 'potamus, he is, for tricks and wice, than a decent bit of 'orseflesh."

This description of the horse put Jack on his mettle.

He wanted a mettlesome leader for a new tandem he was going to drive, and he determined to have this horse—more out of bravado than anything else.

Besides he had paid forty pounds, which he had fairly lost at billiards, therefore, if he gave another twenty, he would have his money's worth in the form of a good horse.

"Where did the horse come from ?" he asked.

"It is a London 'orse, sir," answered Stubbles. "Least-ways I think so, because it belonged to Mr. Davis, of St. Aldate's who had it sent up here just afore he left."

"Davis ?" repeated Jack.

"Yes, sir, Mr. 'Arkaway, sir ; but Mr. May he showed us a receipt from Mr. Davis for the 'orse, so we suspect he bought it of him."

Jack thought it very odd, and going back to Gentle May, exclaimed—

"Do you know Mr. Frank Davis who was up here last term ?"

"No," replied May, "not in the least. Stay," he added. "That is the gentleman ma's agent bought the horse from. I remember now ; I have the receipt from a Mr. F. Davis."

"Oh, that is it," said Jack. "Well, I'll buy him."

"He is yours. I thought him too mettlesome for me, and am glad to get rid of him. A park-hack is more my style. When I go out riding, the vulgar little boys about shout out—'Get inside, and pull the blinds down!' It makes me so wild, Mr. Harkaway, to be chaffed before ma and Bobby and Thomasina."

He turned away as Jack gave some instruction to the groom, and muttered to himself—

"If the brute doesn't break his neck, it isn't my fault. Deuce take him !"

Jack did not hear this, or his suspicions respecting Mr. Gentle May would have been speedily aroused.

As it was, he thought him a strange mixture of cunning and simplicity.

Not a bad fellow at heart, but half rogue, half flat ; in fact, a man who would develop in time, and become clever.

"He's been brought up at home with a lot of sisters," thought Jack, "and that is sure to spoil the best man that ever was born. A man can't learn any good from a parcel of girls."

They walked home together, and May invited him to tea in his room, which, oddly enough, was the very same that Davis used to occupy.

The same furniture remained in it, and Jack could not help fancying that he was once more friendly with Davis.

When he asked Mr. May how he became possessed of the furniture, he told him that his "ma's" agent in Oxford had bought the furniture from a gentleman who had left, but he did not know his name.

Jack thought it was very funny that May should buy Davis's horse, have Davis's room and even his furniture.

But he did not say anything.

May showed him great hospitality, tried to make himself agreeable, was very funny in his simple manner, and Jack soon dismissed from his mind the suspicion that he could in any way be connected with his late enemy, Davis.

CHAPTER XL

A STRANGE ARRIVAL AT OXFORD.

THE next day Harvey gave Jack a look up after breakfast, and said—

"Are you going to lectures this morning?"

"No, I mean to cut the shop to-day," replied Jack ; "fact is, I've bought a horse, and May and I are going out riding.

"You seem to be wrapped up in that ass," said Harvey.

"The beggar sticks to me so, and I don't see any harm in him. Come with us."

"I don't mind, though I would rather Mr. May was not one of the party. I went to his rooms last night, after you, but you had left, and what do you think I saw on the table?"

"Wine, I suppose," said Jack.

"No, I didn't; it was a wig."

"A what?"

"A wig thing, exactly like his own head of hair. He scrambled it up and put it in his pocket. What on earth does he want a wig for?"

"By Jove!" said Jack, "that's funny. He's a queer fish altogether."

"So I think, and the less you have to do with him the better. What horse is this you are going to try?"

"One I bought from May."

"Already! He's got an eye to business," replied Harvey.

"Don't bully the man. You are jealous, Dick."

"No, I'm not, but I don't like him. I can't put up with him at all."

"What harm can a fool like that do me? Shut up."

"I'll meet you at the stables," replied Harvey.

In ten minutes they were all mounted.

The groom whispered to Jack—

"Don't touch him with the spur, sir. He can't abear it, and will bolt like ninepins."

"All right," answered Jack.

They took the Abingdon Road, and chatted pleasantly as they went along.

After going a few miles, Gentle May exclaimed—

"How do you like the horse, Mr. Harkaway? Put him through his paces. You haven't tried him at a fence yet."

There was a five-barred gate on one side leading into some meadows.

Forgetful of the groom's advice, Jack drove the spurs in the animal's side and put him at the gate.

For a moment the horse reared dangerously, and, had not Jack struck him with the whip between the ears, he would have fallen back on him and crushed him in the road.

Then he took the bit between his teeth, rose at the gate, cleared it, and was off like the wind.

"Case of bolt," said Harvey.

He was right.

Jack found he had no control over him, and sticking his knees well in, gave him his head and let him go.

Away he went, over ditches and hedges, across meadows and ploughed fields, without showing any symptoms of distress.

At length the river was in front of them.

"I'll make him swim it," said Jack, between his teeth.

"Perhaps that will cool his courage."

Accordingly, he whipped and spurred the infuriated animal again, and put him straight at the river, which was swollen by recent rain.

Into the angry torrent he plunged, breasting the current.

Slipping his feet out of the stirrups, Jack got off the saddle and swam to the opposite shore.

Here he awaited the arrival of the horse.

The animal was carried some distance by the stream, but landed at last, standing, shivering and trembling, on the bank.

All the steam was out of him now.

Jack mounted him again and found him as docile as a lamb.

Arriving at Oxford before May or Harvey, he changed his wet things, and by the time he was comfortably smoking a cigar, they came in.

"Thank God, you are not hurt," said Harvey. "I followed you a little way, but you soon distanced me."

"How did you manage him?" asked May.

"Oh, in my usual way. I'm not spilt easily," answered Jack, coldly.

"It's time to go down to Mole's and coach," remarked Harvey.

"Is it? I'll go with you if Mr. May will excuse me," replied Jack.

May, seeing he was not wanted, made profuse apologies for the misconduct of the horse, for which he hoped he should not be held answerable, and retired.

"Shunted him," said Jack.

"Good sort of shunt, too," replied Harvey. "That horse was not safe to ride; he's a perfect fiend."

Jack told him how he had conquered him, and they walked down to Mr. Mole's, where at two o'clock, the men who read with him, assembled.

CHAPTER XLI.

AN ARRIVAL FROM LIMBI.

IN the street were a black woman and two little black children, who, while the woman beat a tambourine and sang a wild sort of song, went round and collected the pennies of the benevolent.

"Dash my wig!" said Jack, "I ought to know that language."

"It's Malay, I'll swear," replied Harvey; "they used to sing it in Limbi and Pisang, too."

"Of course. Hold on a minute; we will hear what she has to say," said Harvey.

The woman was dressed in a dirty cotton print, hanging round her in loose folds, her black hair floated in the breeze, and she seemed to be plunged in the depths of poverty.

Her song, which was in blank verse, was as follows—

"Once I was a princess in my dear native plains and all respected me, until a white man came from across the sea and made me his wife. Ah, me! Ay di me; why was I born?"

"The white man was a cruel deceiver, and betrayed the trust that I placed in him. Woe to me, for I am undone.

"He had two wives, and each bore him a child. Ay di me, why was I born?"

"The white man sailed away in a great ship to the distant shore, whither I have followed him. Woe to me.

"His other wife is dead of grief, but I have brought with me her child and my own, and I have vowed to find him. Ah! me, why did I not die also?"

"Oh! white man, oh! my husband, why did you leave me to pine alone?"

"Oh! where are you now? Will no kind stranger lead the poor wife to her husband, that he may see his children?"

"Ah, me! ay di me; why was I born?"

"Jack," exclaimed Harvey, excitedly, "that's Ambonia."

"Just what I was thinking," answered Jack.

"It's Mole's wife; the woman he married in Limbi. She says Alfura is dead, and she has managed to come over here with the kids. What a lark!"

"I'm awfully glad we spotted her; now we'll have a spree," said Jack. "Won't Mole tear his hair? If we hadn't seen her, she might have gone wandering about the country and have missed him. I will speak to her."

Jack went close to the woman.

"Ambonia," he said.

She started and turned around.

"Who calls me by my name?" she asked.

"An old friend; one whom you knew in Limbi. Do you not recognise me? I will lead you to your husband."

Ambonia uttered a shriek of joy.

She seized Jack's hand and kissed it, saying—

"Tears have blinded my eyes, and much hunger coupled with sleepless nights, has weakened my brain, or I should have known the Tuan Biza of the white man. Welcome Tuan Harkaway, you are my saviour."

In her great delight she would have gone down on her knees in the street, but Jack restrained her.

"Wait here," he said, "while I go into the house on the left. I will leave the door open. When I call Ambonia, through the window, do you enter, leading a child by each hand."

She nodded her head.

"I understand," she replied; "then I shall see my husband."

"I'll show Mole his wife in ten minutes," answered Jack. "Go on with your performance."

He entered Mr. Mole's house with Harvey, and in the large dining-room, which was turned into a study, several men of different colleges had assembled.

They were smoking, talking, asking questions, making notes, lounging about, standing up, and taking things very easy.

It was a part of Mole's system that they should do so.

Oxford men were not schoolboys, he said, and should be treated as rational beings.

They paid him to teach them, which he did, and if they did not have their money's worth, it was not his fault.

You could bring a horse to the water, but twenty men could not make him drink.

So it was with learning. If a man had not the aptitude or inclination to acquire knowledge, it could not be forced into him.

Mr. Mole was standing near the fireplace, with dressing-gown and slippers on; a cap with a tassel covered his head, and he smoked a cigarette.

"Morning, sir," said Jack; "what are we cramming to-day?"

"It's a general disquisition, Harkaway, upon the manners and customs of the ancient inhabitants of Greece. I maintain that we are more moral as a nation than the Greeks were."

"I am prepared to dispute that point, sir," said Jack.

"Very good. I will hear you first, and then I will prove my case by historical illustrations," answered Mole; adding, "if gentlemen would kindly talk a little less at the lower end of the room, it would materially increase our comfort up here."

There was a lull in the conversation.

"We don't hear, sir," said Jack, "of men marrying two wives, and deserting them under the democracy of Athens."

Mr. Mole paled.

"Nor is such a thing allowed under Victoria," he replied. "Polygamy, which, as you are aware, is a union with more wives than one, is an offence to this country, and a man who deserts his wife and children is justly stigmatised as a villain who is unfit to mingle as a harmonious atom in the vast total of modern society."

More than one impressionable freshman made a note of this lovely language in his book, hoping he could remember such an eloquent remark when he went into the schools.

"If," continued Mr. Mole, "you can urge nothing more than that, it will be best for you, Harkaway, to subside. You thrust yourself prominently forward, and you must now pay the penalty of your rashness, by sinking into comparative insignificance. Will any other gentleman combat my proposition, that the boasted civilisation of the ancient Greeks must yield the palm to modern Europe, for virtue, industry, and thrift?"

Jack slipped away to the window, and called Ambonia.

The lady in question was anxiously awaiting the signal.

Leading a dusky child by each hand, she rushed up the steps, crossed the hall, and seeing the dining-room door open, peeped in. The sight of Jack reassured her.

She entered, and giving a furious knock upon her tambourine with her knuckles, looked around her.

The husband of her affections, the Mole of her heart, dearly beloved chief of the pale-faces, was in front of her.

She knew him in spite of dressing-gown, smoking-cap and slippers.

What disguise could hide from her hawk-like gaze the tender object of her affection?

With a bound like that of a deer, she sprang upon him, and with a hysterical sob, threw herself upon his breast.

The gentlemen who were reading with Mr. Mole were astonished beyond measure.

What could this strange scene mean?

"Gentlemen," said Jack, "there is a practical illustration of my argument."

"What do you mean?" asked an Oriel man.

"In that lady you behold at one and the same time, a princess and a deserted wife."

"Who's wife?" continued the Oriel man.

"Mr. Mole's. He married two; one is dead, and by a strange fatality the surviving one has followed him to England—has encountered him at Oxford. Yes, gentlemen, it is his deserted wife."

Jack put his handkerchief to his eyes.

"I am overcome by my feelings," he went on. "I weep. Who could restrain his tears when he thinks of man's perfidy, and looks upon his helpless offspring? Harvey, put the kids on the table."

Harvey immediately did so.

"Behold the little cherubs, gentlemen," Jack continued. "What if they resemble sags of boot—I mean bags of soot? Does the colour of a child's skin release the parent from his responsibility? Because a woman is black, is she to be foully betrayed and abandoned? Never, gentlemen, will I believe so ill of Oxford as to credit for a moment that you will support such an abominable doctrine."

Here Jack's eloquence was cut short by an inkstand which struck him on the chest, and knocked him off the chair from which he had been spouting.

A deluge of ink covered his face, his shirt, his hands.

It was Mr. Mole, who, having freed himself from Ambonia's frantic embrace, had, in his rising passion at Jack's flood of eloquence, tried to put a stop to it.

"That's a hot un for me," muttered Jack, spitting out a mouthful of ink. "Wonder what they make ink of? It don't taste nice by any manner of means," he added.

Loud cheers had followed Jack's address, and the utmost confusion prevailed.

Every one began to talk at once.

The chaff directed against Mr. Mole was fast and furious.

In a moment the unhappy professor saw that his career at Oxford was cut short by this untimely episode.

Cursing Ambonia in his heart, but afraid to offend her, his face was the picture of despair.

Never could he survive the ridicule which the native wit and the inventive genius of Oxford would heap upon him.

He might have lived down the mistake of the talking monkey, and he had already tided over the ancient stone with the Runic inscription of Drun. Kasaf. Iddler.

But Ambonia's presence in Oxford was the last straw which was to break the camel's back.

CHAPTER XLII.

MR. MOLE TURNS HIS ATTENTION TO SCIENCE.

FOR once in his life Mr. Mole was firm.

Calling Jack to his side, he said—

"Harkaway, will you do me a favour?"

"It depends upon what it is, sir," replied Jack.

"Bring those little fiends upstairs, one under each arm."

"What for?"

"I must take Ambonia away. You have been very indiscreet. Why did you say what you did to all my pupils here?"

"Only told the truth, sir," said Jack. "Is there any harm in that? Was it a virtue in Athens to tell falsehoods?"

"Tush! tush!" said Mr. Mole.

"What language is that, sir?"

"Tush is English, and means what the military would call cease firing; that is, be quiet, for goodness' sake."

Ambonia came up to them and began to talk loudly in her own language, while Mr. Mole, endeavouring to pacify her, drew her towards the door, and led her upstairs.

He was the owner of the whole house.

His housekeeper was an aged lady by the name of Bimms.

Mrs. Bimms was one of those dear creatures who have had one husband, and want another.

Her first unfortunate was a tradesman, who at his death left her very poorly off.

Two children had blessed her union with commerce, but they were out in the world gaining their own living.

When Mrs. Bimms came to take charge of Mr. Mole's establishment, she fixed her eye upon such an eligible bachelor.

She even went so far as to hope that he might marry her some day.

Jack called it a swivel eye, and he did so advisedly, for Mrs. Bimms had an abnormal squint, and seemed always looking round the corner.

This wonderful eye could look any way, and in any direction.

She was in the kitchen preparing a snug little dinner, when Ambonia stopped before the house.

It had entered into her calculations that she might be asked to partake of the repast.

When she saw Ambonia enter Mr. Mole's establishment, she was much surprised, and her astonishment increased when she saw her master leading the dark lady up the staircase.

"He must be mad," she said to herself.

Only the day before she had her fortune told by a local soothsayer, who informed her in return for the payment of one shilling, that she would be married again, and that her second husband would be a learned man.

This prediction clearly pointed to Mr. Mole.

But as the prophecy was dictated by the fortune-teller's knowledge of Mrs. Bimms's occupation, there was nothing very wonderful in it after all.

Mrs. Bimms rushed up the stairs after Mr. Mole and the dark lady, and caught them on the landing.

"What is the meaning of this, sir?" she asked, breathless with indignation,

"Oh, it is you, Mrs. Bimms," replied Mr. Mole. "This lady is a princess in her own country—I have been abroad as you know."

"I have heard so, sir," replied the housekeeper coldly.

"Well, the fact is we are old friends, and the princess will stay here with her children."

Mrs. Bimms gave a faint scream.

"I didn't think you'd ha' done it, sir," she cried. "You such a respectable gentleman too."

"You must do as I tell you; go and get some tea ready."

"Not me, sir. No, I'm an honest Englishwoman, and I ain't a-going to wait on no foreign hussies."

"I say you must."

"And I say I won't. There, that's flat—flat as a iron," replied Mrs. Bimms, crossing her arms defiantly.

"What does she say, my cherished one?" asked Ambonia, looking up in Mr. Mole's face caressingly.

"Nothing; it's all right," returned the professor, in the Malay dialect. "The children shal' come up directly, and I will get you some refreshments. Go into my bedroom and make yourself comfortable. I will get rid of my pupils and rejoin you."

Ambonia went into the handsomely-furnished room, and was enraptured with the beauty of everything.

Shutting the door Mr. Mole said sternly to Mrs. Bimms—

"Out of my house, if you please."

"Oh," replied Mrs. Bimms, with a sarcastic smile, "if it's a question between black and white, I'm willing to quit."

"Be off," said Mr. Mole angrily. "I will be obeyed in my own house."

"Oh, you poor, weak, silly creature," returned Mrs. Bimms. "I should be ashamed to own you as a master. Fond of a black woman? Well, I never."

She began to laugh heartily.

"Ha, ha, ha!" she exclaimed. "Like 'em black he does. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fiend!" answered Mr. Mole. "Let me pass."

He pushed rudely by her, and re-entered the lecture-room.

During his absence Jack and some other men had been having some fun with the children, who were crying bitterly.

Each had a smoking-cap on, and they had been grotesquely marked with chalk about the hands, face, and feet.

This had the effect of burnt cork on a white person.

"What's the meaning of this?" exclaimed Mr. Mole, aghast.

"Piebald kids, sir," replied Jack. "Make their fortune in a caravan at a fair."

"Do you want to distract me?" answered the professor, plunging his hand wildly into his hair.

"Not more than usual, sir," said Jack.

"I shall leave the university."

"Don't do that," said a man from New; "you'd be a loss."

"Gentlemen," exclaimed Mr. Mole, "unhappy circumstances, over which I have no control, will compel me to close my classes. Your subscriptions shall not be payable. Leave me, if you please, until happier times arise."

The men quietly left the house, telling him not to worry himself, but to put on a white wife to counterbalance the influence of the black one.

Only Jack and Harvey remained.

"Harkaway," said Mr. Mole solemnly, "I am a disgraced and ruined man. You have exposed me. It is to you I owe my shame."

"Marriage, sir, has its obligations," answered Jack.

"Granted, but why should you expose me?"

"I felt for Ambonia."

"For that black——"

"Don't call names, sir," interrupted Jack. "She was the wife of your bosom."

"In Limbi—yes."

"What is the difference?"

"Over in this country one goes in for colour, and white is the fashion," answered Mr. Mole, who in the midst of his grief could not repress a smile.

"Did she not bear you a child? Isn't Alfura dead?—and you have not shed a tear to her memory."

"Perish Ambonia, as Alfura perished," replied Mr. Mole. "I am a ruined man. How can I show my face again in the university of Oxford?"

"I am in an awful stew,
What the dickens can I do,
When I'm hunted from the U-
niversity of Oxford?"

sang Jack.

"Harkaway, do you want to madden me?" exclaimed Mr. Mole.

"Shouldn't mind doing it for a change, sir," replied Jack. "What do you think of the ancient Athenians now, sir? Very moral people, weren't they?"

Mr. Mole seized a pipe, filled and lighted it.

He then went to a cupboard, took out a bottle of brandy and drank nearly a tumbler full.

"Give us a swig, sir," said Harvey.

"You want none. You have not the agitated mind with which I am tormented," answered Mr. Mole.

"Going to get tight, sir?" asked Jack.

Mr. Mole puffed away at his pipe in silence.

"If you don't watch it, sir, you'll have Ambonia down after you," said Harvey.

The children, who were still on the table, began to cry.

"Music!" exclaimed Jack.

"Strangle the brutes," said Mr. Mole. "Oh, if anybody would put them in the water-butt."

While this conversation was taking place down stairs, a scene was occurring at the upper part of the house.

Mrs. Bimms no sooner saw Mr. Mole descend the staircase than she went into the bedroom.

"You ugly black thing, you!" she exclaimed, shaking her fist.

Ambonia did not understand her, but she guessed from her manner that she was saying something insulting.

"Who you be?" she asked in the little English she had picked up.

"Your betters any way; I ain't black, nor I don't have to run after gentlemen who don't want me."

"Get out this," said Ambonia, angrily.

"I'll see you—further first," replied Mrs. Bimms, resolutely.

She was a firmly-built woman of five-and forty, well nourished upon stout brandy, and her eyes winked wickedly.

It was evident that she meant mischief.

A tall chimney-pot hat of Mr. Mole's was hanging on a peg.

Taking it down with the quickness of lightning, Ambonia seized Mrs. Bimms by the arms, pressed them behind her back, and while in a helpless condition, pushed the hat over her face until her head was enclosed in it, and the brim rested on her neck.

"There!" she said, kicking her, and still holding her arms. "Take you that and that. You wantee my husband. Me givee you something, you white ugly fat woman."

Tearing a piece off the skirt of the housekeeper's dress, she tied her hands behind her back.

Dismal moans came from beneath the hat.

Ambonia seized Mrs. Bimms's back hair.

It came off, being only a chignon.

"Ha! she not wear own hair," cried Ambonia. "Me beatee white woman beast."

She pushed her down stairs, and with pleasure saw her fall down the first flight, then she returned to the bedroom, and began to arrange her hair in a fascinating manner before the glass in expectation of Mr. Mole's speedy return.

Jack had in the meantime pacified the black children by giving them a penny each.

"Dance, you little demons, dance," he cried, in their own language.

They began to move about, first on one leg and then on the other.

"Don't the little Moles do it well?" said Harvey.

"Peace, Harvey, peace!" exclaimed Mr. Mole. "My reason is tottering."

At this moment Mrs. Bimms groped her way into the room.

At the strange spectacle of a female, her head hidden in a man's hat, Mr. Mole sprang from his seat.

"Bless us and save us? what is it?" he exclaimed.

Jack ran to her, and cut the string which bound her arms.

The housekeeper removed the hat with difficulty and gasped for breath.

"I'll have her life!" she cried. "She did it—that black think he calls the princess."

"Don't, my dear Mrs. Bimms; forbear!" cried the wretched Mole.

"I'll be the death of her. Yes, I will, if I'm hanged for it."

"Won't something less content you?" said Jack. "Let her down easy; have her kids."

"Ha!" cried Mrs. Bimms, as her eyes lighted upon the children.

She seized one under each arm, and ran frantically away.

Awful yells arose.

"Stop her!" exclaimed Mr. Mole. "For the love of Heaven stop her. The woman will murder them."

Jack, Harvey and Mr. Mole followed her as speedily as possible.

She took the direction of the back yard.

When they overtook her, she was standing complacently before the water-butt.

"Where are my helpless infants?" demanded Mr. Mole.

There was no reply.

"Woman, I demand my children," he cried, shaking her, fearful of the consequences of the dreadful crime.

"Look in the water-butt," replied Mrs. Bimms.

In an instant Jack and Mr. Mole laid hold of the huge tub, and overturned it.

The water rolled out.

So did the little half-drowned Moles.

They were not dead.

The only effects of this immersion was to wash off the chalk with which Mr. Mole's pupils had ornamented them. Taking them up tenderly, Mole turned to go up stairs with them to their mother.

"Harkaway," he said, "guard that fury."

He pointed to his housekeeper.

"I dismiss her," he added. "She can call for her wages in the morning. Put her out."

"Now then, old girl," said Jack, as Mr. Mole disappeared with the children, "you've got to step it."

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Bimms.

"Your name's Walker. Out of this."

"I ain't a-going."

"Aren't you? We'll see about that," replied Jack. "Off you go. Quick step; march. One at a time is quite enough for Mr. Mole. Walk."

Mrs. Bimms found herself being gently put out of the yard by the tradesmen's entrance.

When she was in the street, she kicked at the door.

Then she screamed, and eventually called—"Police!"

But thinking better of it, she went to her friends, who did not live far off, and made them acquainted with her grievances.

The little Moles were put to bed, and had muffins and tea given them.

They asked for rice and sugar, which they had.

Then they cried because they had eaten too much, and their mother slapped them after which they cried themselves to sleep.

Ambonia and Mr. Mole descended to the drawing-room, where Jack and Harvey were smoking cigars and drinking beer.

Ambonia went up to Jack and kissed him, whereupon he kissed her back again.

"I say, Harkaway, I can't allow that," exclaimed Mr. Mole.

"It's only a compliment, sir," answered Jack; "and now what are you going to do?"

"That is more than I know," replied Mr. Mole, sadly.

Ambonia came and sat on his knee, patting his face and laughing merrily as she told him in her own language that she had forgiven him for deserting her, and was so pleased to see him again.

She had come over to England in a merchant vessel, her friends supplying her with money.

But when she arrived in London, she could not find him as she had expected, and soon her money was gone.

When she was reduced to destitution she determined to go all over the country with the children, until she found him

Fortune had crowned her labours with success.

Ambonia was happy, Mr. Mole was not.

That made all the difference.

When Jack saw her petting Mr. Mole he exclaimed—

"Now the spooning is going to begin, I'd better cut it.

See you again soon, sir. Beg to congratulate you on your good luck."

"Good-night, Harkaway," said Mr. Mole. "I wish you the same luck you have bestowed upon me. Good-bye; perhaps for ever."

The young men took their leave and went back to Jack's rooms at St. Aldate's, where they had some coffee and sat down to chat.

"Will Mole do anything desperate, do you think?" asked Harvey.

"Not he," replied Jack. "Mole isn't a fool."

"But this affair will smash him up. It will be all over Oxford to-morrow, and he won't keep any pupils."

"He's got the money for which he sold his tea-garden in China," said Jack, "and that will keep him."

"Wasn't it too bad of you to expose him?"

"Not a bit; he shouldn't do such things. If a man will marry two wives, he must take the consequences."

"The consequences in his case are niggers."

Jack laughed, and some other men coming in, the matter was not further talked about.

Two days passed.

Then Jack went to Mr. Mole's house, and found it shut up.

He was told that Mr. Mole had gone a little way into the country to live.

It was quite a fortnight before Jack got any definite information respecting Mr. Mole.

Then it came from Sir Sydney Dawson, who had been riding in the country.

Sir Sydney said he had seen Mole sitting in front of a rustic cottage, with two black children running about, and Ambonia making him brandy and soda.

"What's his game?" asked Jack.

"Science, I think?" replied Sir Sydney. "Because he told me he was making a balloon."

"What for?"

"That's just what I asked him, and he replied that he wanted to get away from this country. His face was awfully scratched, and his right hand was bound up with rags."

"He's been fighting with Ambonia. I knew how it would be," said Jack. "But the balloon licks me."

"He means to sail away and cut the connection."

"Shouldn't wonder," replied Jack. "Where will he sail to?"

"That depends upon circumstances."

He's got a large tent in which the balloon apparatus is being fixed. I saw the preparations, and the car will be grand."

"Does Ambonia suspect anything?"

"Not she. Her nature is very simple," replied Sir Sydney, "from what I saw of her."

"Fancy Mole going in for science. Wonder if he would give a fellow a lift in his balloon."

"Let's ask him. My duns are worrying me awfully, and I shouldn't mind a journey somewhere," answered Sir Sydney.

"When will it be ready?"

"Oh, not for months," he said. "It's a very swell affair, and will cost a lot building, and take time."

"I'll keep my eye upon him. Poor old Mole! he was always in trouble while he knew me," said Jack.

"If that is the case he would cut your acquaintance if he is wise."

"Can't do it, dear boy," answered Jack. "I have a power of persuasion, which neither Moles nor baronets can resist."

"Don't you try it on with me, or I will shunt you in an hour," replied Sir Sydney Dawson, smiling.

Monday knocked at the door.

"What is it?" exclaimed Jack.

"A note from Mist' May, sir," answered Monday.

"Give it here. What a nuisance the fellow is."

Jack opened the note, after asking Dawson's permission to do so.

As he proceeded to read its contents, he looked pale, and a dark frown gathered on his brow.

CHAPTER XLIII.

A MYSTERIOUS PARCEL.

SEEING that Jack was upset, Sir Sydney Dawson, exclaimed—

"Anything disagreeable in the letter? Is your grandmother dead, or has your sister bolted with a lawyer's clerk?"

"As I have neither the one nor the other, you are out in both cases," answered Jack.

"Perhaps the bank in which your governor puts his money has gone to smash."

"Wrong again."

"Then your mother's favourite cat is dead?"

"She hates animals, and we have nothing more important at home than a painted cock-sparrow—pale yellow sort of colour, which we are foolish enough to call a canary, but as it never sings, I have my doubts," said Jack.

"Governor go in for cows?"

"Yes, he farms."

"Then the cows have got the rinderpest—what do you call it?—cattle-disease; or the rickyard's burnt down, or his pet bantams have got the pip, or the churn's gone wrong, and they're hard up for butter, or——"

"My dear fellow," replied Jack, "if you were to guess for a month, you wouldn't hit it."

"Let the oracle explain itself. I am not a good hand at guessing. Unfold the mysterious tale forthwith, or look out for a book at your head."

"Thank you!" exclaimed Jack. "The book would not be long in coming back again. But, look here, I have had a letter from Gentle May."

"If it's not an impertinent question, who may the individual be?" asked Sir Sydney, crossing his legs.

"A freshman, and the biggest ass I ever saw."

"If names go for anything in this sublunary sphere——"

"That's a big word," exclaimed Jack. "What was it?"

"Allow me to explain. At somebody's lecture the

other day, I was taught that a sphere meant a globe, and a globe meant the earth. *Sub* was Latin for under, and *Luna* meant the moon, and as our earth is beneath the moon, I intended to convey the idea of the world on which we now sit and smoke, to your limited comprehension."

"Thanks," replied Jack, drily. "Go on."

"That's all."

"You mean that Gentle May ought from his name to be a fool."

"Exactly," answered Sir Sydney.

"He isn't," said Jack. "I have found him just the contrary, but he has riled me in this letter."

"Oh, it is from the party with the funny name."

"Yes."

"Serves you right. When you are established at a place and have friends, you should not pick up with a lot of new fellows you know nothing about," replied Dawson.

"He brought a letter of introduction to me."

"All the more reason why you should fight shy of him."

"But the introduction——"

"Hate introductions," interrupted Sir Sydney. "A fellow generally wants to get you into some swindle, or borrow a five-pound note from you, when he gets an introduction."

"He is so simple, though."

"Possibly. What does his simplicity consist in, in the present instance?"

"He says he has got the toothache and can't go out—asks me to go to the chemist's and buy him some stuff for his tooth, and then go on to the station and inquire for a parcel for him, which I shall find there, and I am to be very careful with it, as it contains valuable property."

"That's pretty good cheek for a freshman," said Sir Sydney, laughing.

"Just what I thought."

"Fancy making a porter of the best oar and the best bat in the university. You should cut this man, Harkaway. It's bad form to know such fellows."

"It's only his simplicity."

"Hang his simplicity, and him too, to the same tree. That's what I should say," replied Dawson.

"I think I shall humour him, and go and do his errands."

"Like a shop-boy," said Dawson, shrugging his shoulders. "Well, there is no accounting for taste."

"Consider a moment."

"It does not want any consideration. All I know is, if a fellow asked me to fetch and carry for him, I should refer him to his scout."

"I'll do that afterwards. It will be a good joke to do as he asks. When we were in London last summer, my father had a house in Belgrave Square. Lord Eccleston called on him, rather badly dressed; and the hall porter thinking he was nobody, said my father was engaged for a few minutes, and asked his lordship to go to the nearest 'pub.' and get him a pint of porter, giving him the halfpence and saying he should have a penny for himself."

"Did he do it?"

"Yes, and has told the story as a great joke ever since. The porter almost fainted, when he knew who Eccleston was, and that he was a cabinet minister with twenty thousand a year."

"Well," said Sir Sydney, "if you are going in for the errand-boy sort of thing, I will see you through it. Let's get him a ha'p'orth of arsenic for his tooth, and shy his parcel at his head."

"We won't behave so ferociously as that," answered Jack, putting on his hat.

They left college together, and went to the railway station, where they asked for, and obtained, a heavy parcel, directed to Mr. Gentle May.

Jack put it under his arm, and as they strolled back, they observed Kemp standing inside the entrance to a small hotel near the station.

"There is that fellow Kemp," said Jack. "If it wasn't for him, I should like a beer."

"Never mind him. I certainly should not keep out of a place because he was in it," answered Sir Sydney.

"Come in, then."

They entered, and were asked into the private bar, into which Kemp followed them.

Neither Sir Sydney nor Jack took any notice of him, and he pretended to be very much engaged in admiring the charms of a young lady who officiated as barmaid.

When Jack's back was turned, the barmaid took up a newspaper and very dexterously pinned it to his coat collar.

Two or three people came in and began to laugh.

First of all the merriment was subdued, then it degenerated into a loud guffaw.

Turning round, Jack exclaimed—

“What on earth are those fellows laughing at?”

“Country bumpkins will laugh at anything,” answered Sir Sydney.

Kemp approached the mantelpiece with a cigar in his mouth, and a piece of paper in his hand.

A small fire burned in the grate, more to keep a kettle boiling than because the weather was cold.

“If you don't want all the fire, you fellows,” he exclaimed, “perhaps you will kindly let me get a light.”

Sir Sydney moved a little, but Jack did not stir.

Kemp bent down, and putting his arm between them, lighted his cigar, but at the same time managed to set fire to the paper pinned to Jack's back.

“Thank you,” he said, and withdrew.

A brief space elapsed.

Suddenly Sir Sydney exclaimed—

“Curious smell of fire, isn't there?”

“So I thought,” replied Jack.

“Smoke too. Wonder where it is.”

“Ask the barmaid,” said Jack.

“I say, miss,” exclaimed Sir Sydney, “**is there anything burning on your premises?**”

The barmaid looked round, and replied—

“I think your friend is on fire?”

“On fire?”

“Yes.”

At this moment Jack experienced an unpleasant sensation about the regions of his legs.

His calves were unpleasantly warm.

“By Jove!” he exclaimed; “I'm hot.”

“Why, who the deuce has done this?” said Sir Sydney. “There is a burning newspaper fastened to your back. and your gown and coat-tails are smoking like mad.”

"Send for the engine," suggested the barmaid.

"Pull it off, somebody!" cried Jack.

He grew alarmed, and ran wildly about.

The more he moved the faster the flames burned.

Kemp with difficulty refrained from laughing.

In his terror Jack ran into the street, and very swiftly Sir Sydney ran after him, and after tearing off the paper, forced him on his back in the gutter, down which some dirty water was running.

"You'll be all right directly, old man," he exclaimed. "How are the legs?"

"Warmish," replied Jack.

He rose, and Sir Sydney surveyed the damage.

"Bags rather burnt," he said; coat-tails ditto, body of coat injured by water, ditto gown, cap unhurt, having rolled into rain. "Uninsured."

"Who did it?" asked Jack.

"Query," said Sir Sydney.

Jack found himself the centre of an admiring crowd.

"Hurrah, boys! here's another guy!" exclaimed a townsman.

There was a roar of laughter.

"Better erect another martyrs' memorial," said a second.

"He's Cranmer, come to be burnt over again," shouted a third.

Jack was getting wild.

Sir Sydney saw this, and said—

"Come inside."

"Hanged if I do. I'll have it out of somebody," replied Jack.

"You must pitch into me first, then," replied Dawson, dragging him forcibly into the house.

"Let go, Dawson," cried Jack, when inside the bar. "I won't be mauled and messed about like this by anyone."

"It's only his Dawson," replied the baronet, coaxingly.

"He don't mind his Dawson, does he?"

"Don't be a fool. Where's Kemp? He knows something about this, I'll swear."

"Of course; Kemp was the only man in the bar. He must have done it; I'll swear I didn't. I hate those practical jokes."

"If I thought you would lower yourself to such a

thing, I'd never speak to you again, that's all," said Jack, savagely.

"Perhaps I should survive it, but I take my dick it wasn't me. Did his angry passions rise and get the better of him?"

"I am wild," replied Jack.

"Enough to make you."

"Let's get back. Kemp's sloped, I expect, for I don't see him."

"He's wise," replied Sir Sydney. "Hold hard a minute; I haven't paid. What have we had?"

"Two glasses of bitter," replied Jack.

The barmaid had discreetly vanished as well as Kemp. Only a boy was in the bar.

"Now then, stupid," exclaimed Sir Sydney; "wake up! Do you hear? Wake up, stupid; I don't know your other name."

"What is it, sir?" asked the boy.

"Two bitters. Catch," said Sir Sydney, who threw him a sixpence.

"That's right, sir," said the boy. "Bitters is three-pence to Oxford gents in the private bar."

"Bismarcked again," answered Sir Sydney. "But no matter. Give me that sixpence back, boy. It was a bad one."

"Duffer, sir? I thought it was thinnish," said the boy, unsuspectingly, handing back the coin.

Dawson put it in his pocket.

"We shall pay when we are passing," he said. "However, you will have your revenge in two stomachaches, for the beer was beastly bad."

The boy stared blankly at him.

"Where's my parcel?" asked Jack, looking round him.

"What parcel?"

"Why, May's; the one we went to the station for."

They looked everywhere for it, but it was gone.

"What a nuisance," said Jack. "I've lost the parcel. Perhaps some of those fellows at the bar sneaked it while I was on fire."

"More unlikely things than that have happened in this sublunary——"

"Bother your sublunary spheres," interrupted Jack.

"What shall I say to May?"

"Tell him it was a plan of Kemp's, which I believe it really was."

"Do you?"

"I do, indeed."

"Bless that fellow," said Jack. "I should like to give him what for. It was like his infernal cheek to set me on fire, if he did do it."

"Who else could?"

"It must have been done while he lighted his cigar."

"No doubt," replied Sir Sydney.

"I must tell May how it happened, and if there was anything very valuable in the parcel, I will pay him for it. Can't say more than that, can I?"

"No; if the fellow is a gentleman, he will see it in a moment."

"Will you come with me to his rooms?" asked Jack.

"No thanks. Kindly excuse me. Not a man I want to know at all."

"Please yourself."

"You'd better re-gown and put on another pair of bags," laughed Sir Sydney.

"I will when I get back to college. Come along," replied Jack.

They walked back together.

Jack was not in the best of tempers, and when he got to his rooms, he took off his boots and threw them at Monday's head, because he got between him and the light.

"Why um throw um boots, sare," asked Monday.

"Want to see which are hardest, um boots or um head?"

"Get out," replied Jack, "I'm in a nasty temper."

Monday retired, rubbing his head, and Jack prepared to go to Gentle May's room by himself.

CHAPTER XLIV.

AN EXPOSURE.

A SHORT time after the scene in the hotel Kemp made his way into Gentle May's room.

He had something carefully hidden under his arm and covered with his gown.

May was evidently waiting for him, as he got up eagerly from his seat, and exclaimed—

“Well, did it come off all right?”

“Beautifully,” replied Kemp.

“How did you manage it?”

“Easily enough. As I thought, they came into the hotel near the station, and I began to play my little game.”

“Where is the parcel?”

“Here,” replied Kemp, throwing it on the table.

May hastily took it up, and hid it away in a drawer.

“Only a flat-iron and a couple of horse-shoes,” he exclaimed, with a laugh, and in a very different manner to that he usually assumed.

“It doesn't matter,” answered Kemp also laughing.

“Jewellery is heavy when it is made of pure gold, and as long as the parcel is heavy, you can swear it contained what you like.”

“Go on with your story,” replied May.

“I spooned that barmaid awfully. She is a nice little tit, and I rather liked it. I'm on there.”

“No, be hanged if you are. She's an old spoon of mine.”

“Never mind, we shan't quarrel about her,” answered Kemp. “There are plenty of little fillies running about loose, and only wants breaking in. As I was saying, I spooned her, and got her to fasten a newspaper to Harkaway's collar with a pin.”

“What was that for?”

“You'll hear directly. Don't be so awfully anxious.”

“All right; spin along,” replied May, lighting a cigar, and pouring out some beer.

“What's that?” asked Kemp.

“Malt; just fetched from the buttery.”

"Give me a pull. I hadn't time to drink, and I've pelted along so beastly hard to get up here that I'm as dry as a ditch in summer."

May pushed the tankard over to him, and he drank heartily.

"Feel better?" asked May. "I do, after a good beer, always."

"Stones better," answered Kemp. "Well, when I saw this done, I went behind Mr. Harkaway to light a cigar, at a little bit of fire there was to boil the kettle, and in doing so I set the paper in a blaze."

"What a lark! Wasn't there a chyike?"

"Rather. Dawson was with him, and when Harkaway ran into the street in a funk, he put him in the gutter."

"Whereupon you sloped with the plunder?"

"Exactly."

"And left them to fight it out?"

"You're right, my pippin," answered Kemp. "And now fork out the chips. I've earned them."

May gave him four five-pound notes.

"Twenty quid," he said; "that's what we agreed for, isn't it?"

"To a brown, thanks," replied Kemp, storing the money away in his trousers pocket, as if it had been cigarette paper.

"What will Harkaway do?" inquired May, after a slight pause.

"Kick up a shine, I expect."

"With whom?"

"Me. I shall be accused of getting up the disturbance, in which the parcel was lost."

"You are very much alarmed at that, of course?"

"Very," replied Kemp, smiling.

"I know what I shall do, and if I don't make it hot for him, I——"

There was a knock at the door, which Kemp had inadvertently left open.

"By Jove!" said Kemp. "There he is!"

"I wish you were out of it. But it can't be helped. Stand by me," replied May, turning a shade paler.

The next moment Jack entered the room.

"Perhaps I am intruding?"

"Not at all," replied May.

"I was not aware Mr. Kemp was a friend of yours."

"Quite a recent acquaintance, I assure you."

"Is it an offence for me to know a fellow with whom you are on terms of intimacy?" asked Kemp insolently.

"I don't wish to talk to you at present, therefore, oblige me by drying up," replied Jack.

Kemp walked to the window, and putting his hands in his pockets, began to whistle.

"How's your toothache?" asked Jack.

"Better, thanks. Have you got me any stuff?"

"No, I forgot it. Awfully sorry."

"But you have my parcel, I hope. Ma sent me some very valuable jewellery in it, and I want to make a few presents to friends who have been kind to me, yourself among the number," said May.

"I got it, and unfortunately lost it."

Gentle May started from his chair.

"Lost it!" he exclaimed. "Oh, what will ma say? Oh, Mr. Harkaway, you can not have lost it!"

"I tell you I have."

"Impossible. What will ma say? Dear ma! she will be so annoyed," continued May.

"Listen to me. This is how it happened," said Jack, as he related all that had occurred.

May remained silent, kicking his feet about restlessly.

"If there is anything valuable in the parcel, and you will tell me the amount, I will gladly pay you," Jack said, at length.

"A hundred pounds would not cover my loss. Oh, Mr. Harkaway, I am sorry for you, but I must tell the police," replied May.

"Sorry for me? Why?"

"The circumstances are so suspicious."

"What the deuce do you mean?" said Jack, all the blood coming into his face.

"I told you the parcel was valuable in my note."

"Well?"

"And you live in a fast set."

"Hang me if I take your meaning," replied Jack.

"I don't say so, but there's ill-natured people who would say you—a—you stole the jewellery," said May.

This was more than Jack could stand.

"You contemptible little humbug," he said. "I'll

have your life. How dare you say such a thing to me? How dare you?"

He rushed at him, seized him by the neck, and shook him like a rat.

Each time he shook him he repeated—

"How dare you?—how dare you?"

"Oh, don't, please don't! Ma said I was not strong enough to fight," gasped Gentle May.

Kemp advanced in a threatening attitude.

"Let him alone," he exclaimed.

Jack looked at him.

"Did you hear what he said?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Am I not justified in shaking the little beast?"

"No. He was more justified in what he said," said Kemp.

"Oh, was he? Well, I'll polish you off first. I've got an account of long standing to settle with you," answered Jack.

He released May who sank into a chair and began to cry.

"Oh," he said, "what would ma say, and Bobby and Tommy, and all my other sisters? What a disgraceful scene in my rooms, too!"

Jack threw out his left and Kemp rolled over on to the sofa.

"Come on," said Jack. "I'll give you something to remember, Mr. Kemp. You don't perform upon me for nothing, I can tell you."

Kemp was rather dizzy from the effects of the blow.

"I'm not a prize-fighter," he said.

"Nor I."

"Let the little fellow alone. A strong man like you ought to be ashamed to hit a little one like May."

"Is a little man to be cheeky, just because he is small?" asked Jack.

Kemp made no answer.

"If you won't fight, take that," said Jack, kicking him, "and sit still while I perform the same operation upon this contemptible cur, who is more so in my eyes than ever since I find he knows a man of your stamp."

"My stamp?" said Kemp, retiring again to the window.

"Yes. Everyone in Oxford knows what you are, from the dons to the scouts.

"Oh!" groaned May, "that I should ever live to witness such a scene."

"I haven't begun yet," answered Jack. "Come out, you whining hound. You'll tell me I stole your parcel, will you? Come out?"

May refused to move.

Jack made another dash at him, and seized him by the hair.

To his surprise, he fell backwards.

Instead of clutching hair, he had simply pulled off a light wig.

In an instant he was on his feet again.

Before him stood, or rather crouched, in an attitude of abject terror, not Gentle May, but Frank Davis.

"Davis!" he cried. "Is this another conspiracy? Kicked out of the university, have you dared to disguise yourself and enter under a false name?"

There was a dead silence.

"This accounts for Mr. Kemp being here, and the alleged loss of the valuable parcel," cried Jack. "Well, you're a nice pair of beauties, anyhow; but, you see, you are not a match for me."

Still neither spoke.

"Wanted to make me out a thief, did you?" continued Jack, between his teeth—"wanted to have me accused of a robbery, eh? Clever idea, but you're licked, my boys. You didn't do it badly, Mr. Davis. You took me in as Mr. May, and I'll compliment you on your acting, but you went a little too far with your humble servant."

"Since you have found me out," said Davis, "I have only to beg for your mercy."

"What do you expect?"

"Give me till to-morrow to get away out of the university, and I will never trouble you again."

"I will not give you any time, Mr. Davis," said Jack. "You shall be exposed at once. You had to leave Oxford for a disgraceful abduction; the police have got a warrant out against you for your arrest now."

"Spare me," said Davis abjectly.

"Will I? Wait till I see the dean and the police. I'll hunt you out of Oxford, you vermin."

Davis sank back again in his chair, and covered his face with his hands.

He had come back to Oxford after his flight, disguised in such a manner that he thought he should be able to defy detection.

Who could trace any resemblance between the sharp, keen Frank Davis and the simple, stupid Gentle May?

One was dark.

The latter fair.

It was a good plot, but Jack's luck had frustrated its design.

Of course, his hope and end was to ruin Jack in some way.

First of all he tried to make him break his neck, by riding his vicious horse.

Then with Kemp's aid—Kemp being in the secret all the time—he wished to make him out the stealer of the pretended jewellery in the parcel.

If this had been circulated, it would have done Harkaway a great deal of harm.

Gentlemen are particular.

They do not like to have their friends talked about.

"What do you mean to do?" asked Davis, at length.

"I have proved that you came back to Oxford under a false name, when you had taken your real name off the books. You are an impostor. You have committed an offence against the law, by carrying off a girl against her will, and keeping her confined in a labourer's cottage. If that is not enough to ruin you forever, I don't know what is," replied Jack.

"Let me go," said Davis. "I'll return to Singapore."

"I can't trust you," answered Jack. "The police and the college authorities must deal with you. Your acting is too good for me to sleep easily while I know you are about."

Driven temporarily mad, Davis paced the room, his face convulsed with passion.

"Have you no mercy?" he asked, stopping in front of Jack.

"Have you shown me any?" replied Jack.

"The fact was I loved Emily."

"Why should you hate me in consequence?"

"Because I saw there was no hope for me while you lived," said Davis.

"And therefore you wanted to kill or ruin me. Thank you. I'm obliged to you—sincerely obliged," answered Jack, sarcastically.

"Let me go away. I swear you shall never see or hear from me again."

"I will not."

Jack spoke in a tone of decision.

"Kemp," said Davis.

"Well," said Kemp.

"Take this man away. I want to get out of the room."

"I can't interfere. He's too big for me," answered Kemp, who was a coward in his heart.

"By heaven!" screamed Davis; "I will get out somehow."

He made a rush at the door.

Jack's iron frame interposed, and he was frustrated in this attempt.

The window was open.

He took one glance at it.

One long, mad, despairing glance.

"I cannot be exposed and disgraced," he muttered.

"I must go! I must! I *must*! I MUST!"

The excitement under which he was labouring was too much for him.

Making a wild spring, he rushed to the window, jumped on the sill, and waved his arms.

"Curse you!" he cried. "May my dying curse cling to both of you."

The next moment he had thrown himself into the quad.

He fell headlong.

"Save him—stop him! For God's sake save him!" exclaimed Jack, who did not believe he was in earnest, till he saw him fall.

Kemp did not move.

He stood like a marble statue, with blanched lips and motionless hands.

CHAPTER XLV.

JACK IS HAUNTED.

JACK was the first to recover his presence of mind.

Running down stairs he entered the quad, and found Davis lying on his back, apparently dead, the blood oozing from a wound in his head.

The miserable young man, in a moment of frenzy, had committed suicide.

He could not bear the disgrace which would follow exposure, and his hot southern blood was inflamed to such an extent that he was not master of himself.

In an instant Kemp was by his side.

He knelt down and put one hand on Davis's heart, while he held his watch open in the other and looked at the second hand.

A small crowd had collected round them, consisting of undergraduates and others who were crossing the quad.

"Is he dead?" asked Jack.

"Yes," replied Kemp, briefly.

Without saying another word, he ran to the porter's lodge, and presently returned with a shutter, upon which the body was placed.

"Where are you going to take him?" asked Jack again.

"What's that to you?" replied Kemp. "Mind your own business. If it had not been for you, this would not have happened."

Jack was silent.

He felt that he had been the indirect cause of Davis's death, and he was sorry.

The man had done nothing to deserve his sympathy or command his friendship.

On the contrary.

He had been his determined enemy.

Still it was very shocking to see any one stricken down in this awful way, in the pride and strength of his youth.

The fall from the second-floor window was quite enough to account for death.

In melancholy silence the shutter was carried away. At this juncture Sir Sydney Dawson joined the crowd. "What is the diversion?" he exclaimed.

"Davis has committed suicide," replied Jack.

"Davis!"

"Yes," said Jack, abstractedly.

"But," said Sir Sydney, in surprise, "I thought Mr. Davis had left the university, and that St. Aldate's was free from his unsavoury presence."

"Ah, you don't know. I went to Gentle May's room, and I found that May was Davis in disguise. He accused me of stealing his parcel, which you know very well I did not do. I made a rush at him, his wig came off, and when he found he was discovered, and I meant to expose him, he went mad, and jumped out of the window."

"Where is he now?"

"Kemp has taken him away somewhere."

"Poor beggar? what an end," said Sir Sydney.

The men who were standing around went away after hearing the explanation, and dividing into twos and threes, began to talk about the strange occurrence.

Sir Sydney took Jack's arm, and drew him towards the gateway.

Jack followed passively.

Turning down a by-street, they found themselves near the Randolph Hotel, and going in, Sir Sydney handed Jack his cigar-case and ordered a bottle of wine.

"What are you going to do?" said Jack.

"You must have a glass of something to keep you up," replied Sir Sydney; "you are a cup too low. This will never do."

"I can't help reproaching myself with that man's death," said Jack.

"Have a weed?"

"No, thanks; I am too nervous to smoke."

"What was the cause of the feud between you? I never really knew why you and Davis were at variance."

"He met me in Singapore," said Jack; "you know I have been abroad a great deal. Well, he fell in love with my little pet, Emily, whom I am to marry as soon as I have taken my B. A. degree."

"Oh, is the happy event to take place as soon as you are a bachelor of arts?"

"I hope so. Davis's father sent him over here to be educated, and though he had treated me very badly in Singapore, he was not satisfied with that; he began again here, and palled in with Kemp. Between them, they have occasioned me a lot of worry, and another old enemy—Hunston, has stood in with them."

"You ought not to be sorry at Davis' death."

"If he had died in any other way, it would have been different; it is such a shocking thing, his going off as he did. I shall never get over it."

"Nonsense, man," said Sir Sydney. "Drink some of this champagne, and don't be a child."

"He asked me to forgive him."

"And very naturally you would not?"

"No."

"How could you?"

"He said he would never molest me again, if I would let him get away, and not expose him," answered Jack.

"Very likely indeed that you were going to believe him," replied Sir Sydney. "How did he explain his coming up here again, in disguise as Gentle May?"

"It's no use talking about it," said Jack. "He was wrong, but I wasn't right; I ought to have forgiven him, and let him go."

"To give you more annoyance in the future—a very likely thing indeed," laughed Dawson, ironically. "If the man chose to go cranky, and jump out of a window, it was not your fault."

"What will the world say, if there is an inquest, which I suppose there will be?"

"Served him right, that will be the verdict. No one will be sorry for the vicious little Creole."

"Think not?" asked Jack, looking up rather hopefully.

"I am sure of it."

"Won't they blame me?"

"How can they? If the facts are explained, you are sure to come out of it with clean hands. If you had pushed him out of the window, it would be a different thing altogether; he did it of his own free will and accord, and I cannot see how you are to blame in the matter."

"I can't get the sight out of my eyes. The poor fellow looked so awful, lying in the quad, with the blood on his face."

"He wouldn't let you alone," said Dawson.

"I shall be haunted by him, I know I shall."

"Rot! Take a weed?"

"No, thanks," persisted Jack.

"I say you shall. Drink this wine, and then we will have a talk."

Jack was compelled to smoke and take a glass of wine. When the bottle was finished, they strolled about, and dropped into a billiard-room, where there were some Oxford men, whom they joined in a game of shell-out for shillings.

"What are you playing?" asked Dawson.

"Only shell-out," said a voice.

It was Harvey.

"Is that you, Dick?" asked Jack, looking up with swollen eyes.

"Yes, old man; what's come to you?"

"I'll tell you presently. What's your game?"

"Shell-out. Very mild; only for bobs. Will you play?"

"Of course he will," said Sir Sydney; "that's what I brought him here for."

The balls were all put on the table, and the game began.

When Harvey had an opportunity of talking to Jack, he said—

"What's all the row about May and Davis, suicide and grief, and all the rest of it? Everyone is talking about it, and they say it wasn't your fault."

Jack told him all.

"Well, I'm—what shall I say?—knocked off my perch, flummoxed, hit into a heap, sat upon, and utterly extinguished," exclaimed Harvey. "Who'd have thought it? But didn't I warn you against the beggar May, *alias* Davis? My instinct told me there was something wrong about the swab."

Jack made no reply, and when the game was over, he went back to college.

For a week or more Kemp was absent.

At the expiration of that time, as Jack was coming out

of chapel, he saw Kemp, and an irresistible impulse induced him to stop him.

"Mr. Kemp," he said, touching his shoulder.

"Well," replied Kemp, coldly.

"Can I have a word with you?"

"Certainly, if you wish it."

"What has become of Davis? I have looked in all the Oxford papers, and have seen no account of an inquest."

"Perhaps not," replied Kemp; "he recovered a little, and I took him to his friends in London, not wishing him to die—if he was to die, amongst strangers."

"And is he dead?"

"Yes, three days ago; he was buried yesterday."

"Where?"

"In Kensal Green Cemetery, and as soon as the ceremony was over, I came back," continued Kemp.

"Was there no inquest?"

"None. We wished the affair to be kept dark, and if you have any regard for the unfortunate man whom you have driven to the grave——"

"I?"

"Well, we won't quarrel about it," said Kemp; all I will say is if you wish him well, now he is gone, you will hold your tongue about the matter. It is a sad thing, the saddest that I ever mixed up in. Good-morning."

He passed on, and Jack went back to his rooms to breakfast.

A month passed, during which time he was very gloomy and miserable.

Davis's death preyed upon his mind.

Being naturally a good-hearted man, he could not bear the idea of having caused Davis's death, through refusing to forgive him.

But how was he to tell the man would go mad, and jump out of the window?

If people will do these extraordinary things, they are alone to blame and must take the consequences.

It wanted but three weeks to the Christmas vacation.

Jack was reading hard, and he looked forward eagerly to the holidays, which would enable him to have a change, and perhaps turn his thoughts into a more healthy channel.

It may seem very silly, but he thought that he was haunted by the ghost of Davis.

He often sat up till three in the morning reading hard, and when he looked up from his book, he fancied he saw a shadowy form standing near the window, jumping on the sill and falling backwards.

He would rush to the window, and find it closed.

Then he laughed at his silly fancies, but they made an impression on him nevertheless, and he grew thin and pale.

Harvey, with the eye of an old friend, did not fail to see this change in Jack.

One evening he came in and said—

"I feel rather low to-night, Jack, and want a livener. Send Monday for a bowl of bishop to the 'Mitre.'"

"I am busy," replied Jack, looking up from his Herodotus, "but you can have what you like. Start the black."

"Monday!" shouted Harvey.

"I'm coming, sare," replied Monday, from his private room.

"Go and get a bowl of bishop, and look sharp."

"Give um money, sare."

"Go to Putney. Stick it up to Mr. Harkaway's tick."

"I never tick now," said Jack.

"I'll pay for it; then perhaps you'll drink it when it comes," exclaimed Harvey.

"I never drink now," answered Jack.

"Have a cigar?"

"I never smoke now, thanks; you know I am going up for smalls."

"What on earth do you do then?"

"See ghosts," said Jack, nervously.

Harvey laughed.

"Go and get the bishop, Monday, and be lively over it," he said, and when the black had gone, he continued—"The fact is, Jack, old boy, that you are reading too hard, and drinking too much green tea. It won't do. Stash it, my dear fellow."

Jack shook his head in a melancholy manner.

"You won't believe me," he said. "But I give you my word I saw Davis last night."

"Davis?"

"His ghost, I mean."

"Where?"

"In this room," said Jack earnestly.

"How did he come in? How did he go out?" asked Harvey.

"He came in through the door, walked round the room, and how he went away I don't know, for I fainted."

"It's all through reading too hard, Jack," replied Harvey. "You were the best oar in the eight, the best bat in the eleven, and your beastly ambition wants you to be first in the class list."

"No. It's not that."

"I'm satisfied it is, and before I'd ruin my health, I'd see the classical tripos at the bottom of the sea. You can't be everything."

"I don't want to be," said Jack.

"You do. You want to be an Admirable Crichton."

"Not at all," replied Jack feebly.

"You're a born athletic, a rowing-man, a cricketer, and all that sort of thing, but you are not fit for reading hard. Take it easy, and fluke it when you go into the schools."

Monday arrived with the bowl of bishop, and both the young men paid partial attention to it, Jack's spirits reviving a little under its genial influence.

About eleven o'clock, Harvey, after smoking a rather strong cigar, felt sleepy and said good-night, while Jack continued to read Herodotus.

"Cut that old Greek buffer," said Harvey, "and turn in between the sheets. You want lots of sleep."

"Then I want what I can't get. My head aches like blazes now," answered Jack.

"Come down and play at football, or do something."

"I'll tie a wet towel round my head, and go on sapping."

"All right—ta, ta! We are going to have a hard frost, and I'll have you out as soon as the ice bears," said Harvey.

Jack went on reading, turning to his dictionary every now and then, and at last wetted a towel in the hand-basin, and tied it round his head.

It might have been twelve o'clock when he heard a noise.

Looking up, he saw the door open, and Frank Davis entered, or, rather glided, into the room.

His movements were like that of the ghosts in the "Corsican Brothers."

Eyes fixed and glassy, a wound on his forehead, which was stained with blood, the clothes he had on when he fell from the window.

Slowly he walked past Jack, and went to the window.

He looked out and turned back.

"Who and what are you?" almost screamed Jack.

There was no reply.

A cold sweat broke out all over him.

Mocking laughter seemed to come from various parts of the room.

Trembling like a leaf, Jack watched the apparition with all-devouring sight.

It made the circuit of the room, and regained the door.

Then it fixed its snake-like eyes upon Jack, raised its arm threateningly, and vanished.

Harkaway let his head fall upon his hands, and for a time lost all consciousness.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE GHOST ON THE ICE.

It was clear to all Jack's friends that he was far from well.

They put it down to hard work and close study, but Jack knew that he was haunted, and the impression grew upon his mind.

A day or two after the apparition we have described, Jack walked down to the house of the first doctor in Oxford.

He was admitted into the consulting-room, the door was shut, and he was alone with Dr. Angus, who was justly considered one of the best physicians of the day.

"What's the matter, Mr.—Mr. Harkaway?" asked the doctor, looking at Jack's card. "Nothing serious, I hope."

"I can tell you my disease in three words," said Jack.

"Do so."

"I am haunted."

The doctor looked surprised.

"Are you a reading man?" he asked.

"I have been reading lately."

"Do you have delusions, or do you see apparitions?"

"The latter," replied Jack.

"What shape does it take?"

"The form of a man I used to know, who, partly through my fault, fell out of the window and broke his neck."

"Lately?"

"A week or two ago," answered Jack.

"Was he a very dear friend?" asked Doctor Angus.

"No; on the contrary, he was an enemy, but I upbraided myself for his death."

"I perceive. Remorse will often produce a morbid state of mind. When and where do you see the ghost?"

"At night in my rooms. Twice I have seen it in the street in broad daylight, walking in front of me."

"Describe the man to me minutely," said the doctor.

"He is dressed, as he was when he died, with the exception of the cap and gown. Black hair cut short, pale face, and a deep red stain on his temple, just as I saw him lying in the quad of St. Aldate's after the accident."

"Curious case," said the doctor, musingly. "I can see that this fancy is making you quite——"

"You believe, then, it is fancy?" Jack replied.

"Who can speak with certainty?" answered Doctor Angus. "I never saw a ghost, and never met anyone who had, but it would be rash on that account to say there is no such thing as a ghost."

"I always laughed at the idea of ghosts, until lately," said Jack. "But since I have been haunted by Davis, I can't help believing that——"

Suddenly he stopped speaking.

His face went ashy pale, his frame quivered, and with trembling hands he pointed in the direction of a little window, partly covered with a gauze blind, which looked into the street about five feet above the level of the pavement.

If a passer-by chose to be rude enough, he could just look over the top of the blind into the physician's study.

"What is the matter?" asked the doctor, alarmed at his visitor's manner.

"There!" cried Jack. "I saw it again."

"Where?"

"At the window. He was staring at me, as he always does, with his great black eyes ; oh, I cannot bear it, he haunts me everywhere."

Doctor Angus rose, and went to the window.

There was no one there, and but few people in the street.

"Singular case of delusion," he said.

"But I saw him," persisted Jack.

The doctor shook his head.

"Do you think I am mistaken ?" asked Jack.

"I'm sure of it. You must leave off reading ; go more into the open air. I think, if I am not mistaken, you are one of the shining lights of our university, Mr. Harkaway. I seem to be familiar with your name."

"I am in the eleven and the eight," answered Jack.

"Exactly. I thought so ; now take my advice. Go out more ; you shall have some medicine of a tonic character, and I hope to see you better soon. Give me a call in a week's time."

Jack slipped a guinea into the doctor's hand, which was his fee, thanked him, and went away.

He was not at all satisfied with the interview.

To have a fixed delusion in one's mind at his age is not pleasant.

Nor is it agreeable to fancy that you have continually a dead man about you.

The weather continued very cold.

Every night there was a hard black frost, and the dull, heavy sky and easterly wind promised a long continuance of cold weather.

One morning Harvey burst into Jack's rooms after breakfast.

"Hurrah !" he cried, jumping about like a madman.

"What's the row, Dick ?" asked Jack. "Can't you stand still, instead of going about like a teetotum ?"

"The ice bears," replied Harvey, "and I feel so jolly, I can't be quiet."

"Does it bear ? I'm glad of that."

"So am I, old flick. We'll have some skating to-day."

"Where ?"

"I've got an invitation from Holloway. You know Holloway, don't you ?"

"Yes. His people live close by, don't they ?"

"That's it. There is some splendid ornamental water

in his governor's park, and we shall be all to ourselves there. The dog-cart is coming to fetch us at eleven."

"Has he asked me too?" inquired Jack.

"Yes. I made him put you in the party."

"Monday," called Jack, showing more animation than his face had displayed for some time past.

"What um matter now, sare?" replied Monday, coming into the room.

"Get my skates; rub them up well with a bit of sand-paper and oil the straps."

Monday was shivering with the cold.

"Wish um was back in Limbi, sare," he said. "It so jolly cold here."

"That's the beauty of it, you chuckle-headed old cod-fish," replied Harvey, laughing.

"Monday him got on three flannel shirt, two pair drawers, and four waistcoats, but yet um not warm."

"You extravagant beast. Anyone would take you for an animated old-clothes shop."

Monday went away, rubbing his hands, to get the skates ready.

Jack and Harvey walked over to Holloway's rooms, and fond him waiting for them.

The dog-cart was in readiness, and the three got in, being driven quickly away.

As they crossed Magdalen Bridge Harvey noticed a one-armed man looking at them.

"That's Hunston," he exclaimed.

"Is it? What does the fellow want in Oxford? Mischievous brewing again," answered Jack.

"Seen any ghosts lately?" asked Harvey.

"No; not for some days."

"You're getting better. I thought you would," said Harvey, gladly.

When they reached the Hall, where Holloway lived, a merry party was assembled.

The old squire, his wife, their charming daughters, and four boys home for their holidays, crowded round them, making them welcome.

"Come inside, gentlemen," said the squire, "and take the edge off your appetites. There is a boar's head, pheasant pie, and a host of things, which I hope you will do me the honour to taste."

In vain Jack pleaded that he had breakfasted.

He was taken into the dining-room and compelled to eat, afterwards drinking a flagon of home-brewed.

"Now for the ice," cried everybody.

They took up their skates, and joined the party at the front door.

The girls and boys all skated, and were in high glee at the prospect before them.

"Ha!" exclaimed Mr. Holloway, as the sound of wheels was heard, and a carriage was seen coming up the avenue, "here is an arrival. The more the merrier."

"It's Mrs. Travers's carriage," said young Holloway; "I know her pair of greys."

At the mention of this name, Jack's face brightened.

Perhaps Emily was with her, as Mrs. Travers seldom travelled without her companion.

The next minute, the carriage drove up, and Mrs. Travers and Emily stepped out, followed by two boys and the same number of girls.

"Emily, my darling," exclaimed Jack, shaking her hand, "this is really a pleasure, and the more charming because it was unexpected."

The Misses Holloway looked superciliously at Emily.

They could see in a moment that Harkaway was engaged to her, and they had particularly asked their brother to bring some nice eligible men with him.

The Misses Holloway wanted to get married.

Most young ladies do.

"I am so glad to see you, dear Jack," answered Emily.

"But how ill you look!"

"Do I?"

"Yes, indeed. Have you been working too hard lately?"

"Not that I know of," replied Jack. "It is nothing."

He did not like to tell her he was haunted, as the intelligence would have alarmed her.

Presently everyone went to the ice, which was in the centre of a beautiful park.

The ice at one end had been broken up for the cattle, and as the water was very deep there, the skaters were warned to keep away from that part.

Several hours were spent very agreeably.

The ladies enjoyed themselves immensely, and Jack found great fun in teaching Emily to skate.

It was growing dark, and Mr. Holloway proposed that the ladies should return and dress for dinner.

Jack, Harvey and Holloway remained, determined to have another spin before they left off.

"I'm rather cold," said Jack. "I've been coaching Emily, and I think I'll have a livener."

"Cut along, I'll lead you a chivey," said Harvey.

"No, I'll go by myself; I'm not a steam-engine like you."

"Bye-bye," said Harvey, who spun off like a shot.

Jack went off slowly at first, but increased his pace as he proceeded and his blood warmed with the exercise.

The darkness increased.

Innumerable pine and larch trees lined the lake, and cast their funereal shadows upon the shining, slippery ice.

Everything looked dismal and melancholy.

There was a clear course in the centre of the lake, of about two miles from end to end.

The ice was in excellent condition, being very little cut up, and as smooth as glass.

Suddenly Jack saw a figure before him.

He thought it was Harvey.

"Spin along, old man," he said, in high spirits now.

"Bet you a skiv I catch you."

Putting on his best pace, he flew over the ice.

The figure before him made no reply.

Skating as fast as he could, Jack tried to overtake the man in front of him.

He forgot that he was nearing the dangerous portion of the lake, the part of which he had been warned where the ice was broken for the cattle, where the depth was twenty feet or more.

The blinding snow dashed into his face, but he still rushed on.

"I will see who it is," he said between his set teeth.

With a fierce determination he urged himself to his highest speed, like a steam-engine under full pressure of steam.

All at once the figure turned round.

Jack was surprised, for although he had only an imperfect view of the features, he certainly thought it looked like Davis.

"Man, ghost, or devil," he ejaculated, "I will see who you are. I will have no more tricks played on me."

The figure, however, was by this time many yards ahead, and turning towards the other skaters, mingled with them and was lost to sight.

Jack followed.

He did not think of danger; he forgot the warnings that had been given him until a great black gulf yawned straight in front of him.

Then it crossed his mind that he was close upon the broken ice.

Digging his heels down, he tried to stop himself.

It was too late.

The ice gave away beneath him with a crash, and he was plunged into the deep water, which eagerly clasped him in its freezing embrace.

Down, down, he sank, many, many feet.

His heart almost ceased to beat, and he gave himself up for lost.

It is not easy to swim in cold water in the middle of winter after a week's hard frost, when you have a thick boating coat on, a heavy pair of boots with skates attached, and a comforter round your neck which seems to be doing its best to strangle you.

But when Jack came to the surface, he struck out.

It was so dark, and the snow fell so quickly that he could not tell where the shore was.

After swimming a few strokes, he came in contact with the jagged, broken ice, and cut his hands.

He grasped the ragged edge, and tried to haul himself up.

In vain.

His limbs were becoming chilled, and he felt cramped all over.

"Help! help!" he shouted.

The melancholy sound of the wind through the branches or the pine trees seemed to mock him.

"Help, help!" he continued to cry; "I am drowning."

The snow beat upon his face, and the icy water grew more icy, until he was chilled to the marrow of his bones.

He thought of his darling Emily.

The dear little girl whom he loved so much, and who loved him with the same affection he had for her.

He thought of the merry party at the hall, which he had hoped to join, the meeting at dinner, and the round game at cards in the evening.

"Oh! it is hard to die like this," he muttered—"if I must die, after all I have gone through. But here goes for another try."

He clutched the treacherous ice, and was only rewarded by breaking off several pieces instead of getting a firm footing.

His senses gradually began to leave him.

Suddenly he heard a voice exclaim—

"Hullo, Jack! where are you? Hullo-o-u!"

It was Harvey.

Jack was so far gone now that he could speak only with difficulty.

"Hi!" he answered. "Dick, come here. I'm in the water."

Swift as lightning Harvey skated to the spot.

His ears had caught the faint sound.

He knew his friend was in danger.

"Where are you?" he exclaimed, pausing doubtfully in the snowstorm.

"Here; mind how you come. I'm in the water. Gently, for Heaven's sake!" answered Jack, making a last effort.

Harvey went down on his hands and knees and crawled to the place from whence the voice proceeded. Soon strong arms had grasped him and laid him on the ice.

Soon a loving voice whispered words of encouragement to him.

But Jack heard them not; he had become insensible.

When he came to himself he was lying in a warm bed, a lamp burned on a table, and a bright fire was blazing in the grate.

Harvey was by his side, and when his eyes opened, he said—

"That's right, old man; knew you would be yourself soon."

"How did it happen?" asked Jack, trying to remember.

"Drink this," said Harvey, offering him some wine-and-water hot.

Presently it all came back to him.

The figure, the fall in the water, his despair, and Harvey's friendly voice.

"Dick, you saved my life," he said. "But how did you find me out?"

"I saw you start for a spin, for I wasn't far off," replied Harvey, "and followed you. At first I kept up with you; afterwards you went at such a lick I was left behind, and lost you. What made you put such a spurt on?"

"I saw a figure I thought was Davis. I resolved to make certain, and followed. He swerved round all at once. I went on and fell in the water, and should have been drowned if it had not been for you."

"All I can say is, that Kemp and Davis are very artful beggars, and it is just on the cards that the Singapore fellow is not dead yet," said Harvey, with a smile. "But, never mind, you're all right now. We've kept some dinner hot for you, and Emily says she hopes to see you in the drawing-room as soon as possible."

"How about togs?"

"Oh, we've found some. The bag may be a little big, but the coat I think will be a lovely fit. Jump out."

Jack began to dress himself.

He was feeling all right again.

Seizing Harvey's hand, he exclaimed—

"I can never thank you enough, Dick. It would have been horrible to drown like that, and it was touch and go."

"I'm only too happy to have come up when I did. What a night it is, to be sure. Snow falling in torrents. We're not to go back to-night."

The conclusion of "Jack Harkaway at Oxford" is found in "Jack Harkaway's Strange Adventures at Oxford" and may be had from your bookseller or from the publishers of this book postpaid for 75 cents.

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